

**Peter Phillips**

**Roles and identities of the Anglican chaplain:  
a prison ethnography**



**A thesis submitted in accordance with the regulations for the  
award of the degree of PhD at Cardiff University**

**November 2013**

## **DECLARATIONS**

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

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## **SUMMARY**

In this ethnography, writing as both practitioner and researcher, I represent and analyse the opinions and reflections of Anglican chaplains in English and Welsh prisons in order to locate their self-perception of role and identity. The Anglican chaplain has been a statutory appointment in every prison since 1779 and was a central figure in penal practice throughout the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several chaplains wrote at length about their ministry and its significance; this conscious utterance in the public domain dwindled sharply from the 1860s onwards. My research presents current chaplains' perspectives on their role and identity, configured by a social context which is perceived to be secular and in which other world faiths have a strong presence.

Four main areas of focus emerge from the data: working with prisoners, working with staff, the apparently contradictory, ritual nature of secular and religious engagement, and issues of gendered interaction. These data are contextualised by respondents' perceptions of prisons as parishes, the construction of Anglican chaplains' identity by events within and outwith prisons and churches, and perceived relations with the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

Having recognised other models of prison ministry, the thesis ends by identifying modes of potential, structured cooperation between church and chaplaincy.

The epistemological context derives from Goffman's theory of total institutions but recognises subsequent reinterpretations of his work. The methodological reference points are Turner's theory of liminality, Bell's theory of ritual-like activities and Foucault's heterotopia of deviance.

The thesis offers a perspective on a traditional public form of ministry, that of the chaplains themselves, unexplored and not analysed for over a century. It is submitted as a further development in the growing discourse around practical theology and religious ministry in prisons.

## CONTENTS

Declarations	ii
Executive summary	iii
Acknowledgements	x
Prologomena	xii

### **PART 1      CONTEXT**

<b>PRELUDE</b>	1
<b>CHAPTER 1 Congruence and convergence</b>	3
1.1    Why Anglican chaplains specifically and exclusively?	3
1.2    The intertwining of theological subject and sociological method	5
1.3    Practical theology and the living human document	7
1.4    Ethnography and the living human document	11
1.5    The convergence of practical theology and ethnography	18
1.6    Contents and structure of the thesis	22
<b>CHAPTER 2 Literature survey and theoretical framework</b>	24
2.1    Establishment: “A clergyman of the Church of England.”	26
2.2    Chaplaincy and pastoral care	33
2.3    How total is “total”?	39
<b>CHAPTER 3 Methodology</b>	43
3.1    Methodology: theory and practice	44
3.1.1    Why this qualitative approach? Researcher factors	44
3.1.2    Why this qualitative approach? Institutional factors	45

3.1.3	The question of voice and narrator identity	47
3.1.4	Interview based data	47
3.1.5	Purposive sampling	51
3.1.6	Approaching potential respondents	52
3.1.7	Choice of interview location	53
3.1.8	Identity, anonymity and pseudonyms	58
3.1.9	Distancing and defamiliarisation	59
3.1.10	Ethical approval for access to the prisons estate	60
3.1.11	Gatekeeping: access to individual establishments	62
3.1.12	Transcription	63
3.1.13	Coding and data analysis	65
3.2	Prison parables: chaplains as story tellers	65
<b>PART 2 FINDINGS (i)</b>		
<b>CHAPTER 4 Working with prisoners</b>		74
4.1	Themes which emerge from narrative analysis	74
4.2	Praxis	79
4.2.1	Statutory activity – reception into prison	80
4.2.2	Demeanour, dress and appearance	83
4.3	Faith and Mission	84
4.4	Listening: “Confidant(e)s rather than confessors.”	87
4.5	Pastoralia	90
4.5.1	Purposivity and purpose	92

4.5.2	No news is good news.	94
4.5.3	Constraints	95
4.5.4	Chaplains and restorative justice	97
4.6	Issues arising from working with prisoners	104
4.6.1	Chaplains', prisons' and prisoners' and time	107
4.6.2	The chaplain and institutional time	108
4.6.3	The chaplain and prisoners' time	110
4.6.4	Public space and private place	111
<b>CHAPTER 5 Working with other prison staff</b>		114
5.1	Working relations	114
5.2	Working with prison officers	117
5.3	Pastoral ministry to officers	123
5.4	Governors	126
<b>CHAPTER 6 "The slow ballet": liturgy and ritual</b>		129
6.1	Prison pararitual	130
6.2	Chaplains as participants in pararitual: the reception process.	133
6.3	"You are what you eat." From body of Christ to hymn sandwich.	136
6.4	"A divine pickling agent"	148
6.5	Eucharist as prison ritual	150
6.6	"The pastoral end of liturgy": candle lighting	151
6.6.1	Candle lighting: interview responses	152
6.6.2	Reclamation of selfhood: candle lighting as a subversive pararitual	154

6.6.3	Candle lighting: email responses	156
<b>CHAPTER 7 Gender</b>		164
7.1	Priesthood and gender: redefining priesthood	164
7.2	Gendered models of prison chaplaincy	165
7.3	Gender, embodiment and perceived Prison Service culture.	170
7.4	Gendered cross-postings and ministry to prisoners.	179
7.5	Chaplains and a ministry of touch	182
7.6	Women's ministry to women	183
7.7	Chaplains' gendered emotional responses	184
7.8	Sexism and harassment	186
7.9	Familial surrogacy and disclosure of abuse	187
<b>PART 3 FINDINGS (ii)</b>		
<b>CHAPTER 8 The ambivalence of the prison perceived as parish</b>		188
8.1	Prison and/or parish	188
8.2	A pastoral imperative	192
8.3	"A serious house on serious earth"	194
8.4	Prisoners as parishioners	196
8.5	"A bit different to parish life"	198
8.6	"A resource when people need it"	201
<b>CHAPTER 9 Anglican identity</b>		204
9.1	Chaplains and change	207
9.2	The priesting of women	208

9.3	The Anglican chaplain under pressure in a plural society	209
9.4	Pressure from academic sources	211
9.5	Responses to pressure: the PSC conference 1999	212
9.6	Responses to pressure: the “paradigm shift” of William Noblett	214
9.7	Respondents’ perceptions of their Anglican identity	216
9.8	The established Church: affiliation and disaffiliation	216
9.9	The affiliated chaplains	218
9.10	The disaffiliated chaplains	227
<b>CHAPTER 10 “Somewhere out there”: working with and without the Church</b>		<b>232</b>
10.1	The bishop’s licence.	232
10.2	Fractured communications.	233
10.3	Episcopal and diocesan support	236
10.4	Episcopal obligations	239
10.5	The constitutional connection	241
<b>CHAPTER 11 Issues and conclusions</b>		<b>247</b>
11.1	Introduction	247
11.2	The value of the research	248
11.3	The diverse audiences	248
11.3.1	The churches	249
11.3.2	HMPS directorate, Chaplaincy headquarters and chaplains	249
11.3.3	Researchers both academic and practitioner	253
11.4	Relationality	254

11.5	Conclusions	256
11.6	Further research	257
11.6.1	General	257
11.6.2	Chaplains as reflective practitioners and researchers	258
11.6.3	What do faith communities think of chaplains?	258
11.6.4	Chaplains, change and managers	259
11.7	Coda	259
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	261
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	
1.	Ethical approval	287
2.	Fieldwork documents	289
3.	Prompts and questions	294
4.	Sample interview transcripts	297
5.	Codes and classifications	321
6.	Candle lighting: email to respondents	329
7.	Giving bad news: email to respondents	330
8.	Respondent profiles	331
9.	Glossary of prison & other terms used in the thesis	340
10.	Further narratives and stories	340
11.	The multiple heritage of Anglican prison chaplains	350

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## PROLOGOMENA

Chaplains have such a difficult, contradictory, and essential role behind bars.  
*Loïc Wacquant in personal email.*

“We have to touch such men, not with a bargepole, but with a benediction,” he said. “We have to say the word that will save them from hell. We alone are left to deliver them from despair when your human charity deserts them. Go on your own primrose path pardoning all your favourite vices and being generous to your fashionable crimes; and leave us in the darkness, vampires of the night, to console those who really need consolation; who do things really indefensible, things that neither the world nor they themselves can defend; and none but a priest will pardon. Leave us with those who commit the mean and revolting and real crimes; mean as St. Peter when the cock crew, and yet the dawn came.”

*G K Chesterton: The Chief Mourner of Marne.*

“I saw the chaplain and, to be honest, I didn’t like the man. When he came in to see me, he said, “Are you all right?” and I said, “Yes,” and he said, “This is a good prison, good officers, nobody touches you here.” I said, “That’s not what I’ve heard.” He said, “No, no, take it from me. Nobody touches you. I’ve been here for so many years.” His whole attitude was one of *them*, one hundred per cent.

*Nicki Jameson & Eric Allison: A Serious Disturbance.*

The Chaplaincy is committed to serving the needs of prisoners, staff and religious traditions by engaging all human experience. We will work collaboratively, respecting the integrity of each tradition and discipline. We believe that faith and the search for meaning directs and inspires life, and are committed to providing sacred spaces and dedicated teams to deepen and enrich human experience. We contribute to the care of prisoners to enable them to lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release.

*H M Prison Service Chaplaincy Handbook.*

## PRELUDE

To come in and bring love and possibly light into a loveless and dark place..... to show that somebody's actually interested in you and I'm interested in you..... on the Segregation Unit [doing the statutory daily visit] - an extreme example certainly - one particular person, very recalcitrant, so much so that he was only allowed to be on "Senior Officer and 3 staff unlock". Classic case..... I looked through the flap because if he didn't go and face the back wall they wouldn't unlock his door, even to give him his food and that's the level it had got to. As I was doing my round he was told before they opened the door, "Face the back wall." Even looking over his shoulder was a bit iffy but, "Can I have a word with you?" he said. The staff said, "We'll not let you go in there." I was happy to go in, not because I'm particularly a hero but because I don't think he would have attacked me. The staff originally said, "No, we're not risking it, we daren't. If anything goes wrong we're in trouble." But we did between us arrange that he could. There's a corridor leading down on to the exercise yard where there's a gate. So we marched him down to sit on a broken chair on one side and me on another broken chair on the other side, him with his hands handcuffed behind his back. He poured out his story, burst into tears, so I had to sort of reach through the bars to wipe them away for him. It's that sort of ministry I think I can do. I can't remember what it was all about but it made an awful difference to him being able just to tell his story.

This vignette introduces the three groups of people who figure most prominently in this thesis, Anglican chaplains, prisoners and prison staff. The account of a statutory visit to the Segregation Unit was told to me by the Anglican chaplain of a category B local prison. I start with it because it shows the three groups interacting with each other and the physical surroundings in which they act. Moreover, it is a recognizably structured story containing elements of danger and pathos, which exemplifies the chaplain's conception of his function in the prison and hints at the eschatological vision of the Revelation to St John (4, xvii and 21, iv) when "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." To this extent the passage exemplifies in narrative form the chaplain's two functions as prison official and faith minister and the way in which he perceives these to be held together with reference both to action and, by implication, to a theological standpoint. It suggests an "in-between" relationship which can be used as a guide to chaplains' other roles and situations, as between prison and parish and between Church and State.

Much of what I say might be said of chaplains of other faiths and denominations but my work focuses almost exclusively on chaplains of the Church of England and the Church in Wales. In an era and country which are simultaneously perceived to be both thoroughly secularized and religiously plural it may seem perverse to focus on national churches established in law as the Church of England is, and as the Church in Wales was until its disestablishment in 1920, a charge which I answer in *1.1*. This thesis, however, is concerned with chaplains rather than chaplaincy in the sense that it seeks chaplains' own perspectives on their work. It is, thus, a piece of ethnography, exploring practitioners' perspectives on their ministry within a framework of relationality and process. In *1.6* I set out the components of the thesis with an explanation of its order and structure. Throughout the thesis, all cross- referencing is to chapter and section and appears in italics.

## **PART 1 CONTEXT**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **CONGRUENCE AND CONVERGENCE**

1.1	Why Anglican chaplains specifically and exclusively?	3
1.2	The intertwining of theological subject and sociological method	5
1.3	Practical theology and the living human document	7
1.4	Ethnography and the living human document	11
1.5	The convergence of practical theology and ethnography	18
1.6	Contents and structure of the thesis	22

#### **1.1 Why Anglican chaplains specifically and exclusively?**

The immediate reason is that they have been a legally required appointment to every prison in England and Wales since 1823, remaining so until the present day. Their presence thus parallels the growth of prisons into a unified system. A further reason concerns the established position of the Church of England; the Church in Wales was disestablished in 1920 but retains an equivalent status in the context of penal legislation. There is thus a constitutional and a political dimension to Anglican chaplaincy which is different from political issues surrounding other faiths and denominations because of the COE's deep embedding in the state. While I was in the later stages of writing this thesis the Prime Minister, David Cameron, responding to the killing of a British soldier by alleged Islamic extremists, expressed an intention to "deal with radicalization in...our prisons and help mosques expel extremists and recruit imams who understand Britain." (Hansard 3 Jun 2013, 1234-5) This suggests a desire to contain and configure Islam as a nationally and politically acceptable entity. I refer to this again in 2.1.

This is to imply that prison religion is an arena in which fashionably unacceptable doctrines are combatted: a further implication is that chaplains are, structurally at least, agents of control over what is and what is not permitted in the area of religious practice. Anglican chaplains are necessarily implicated in this even if most respondents did not address this locating of themselves.

A third reason for focusing on Anglicans is to make their voices heard; some of their nineteenth century predecessors (Kingsmill, Field, Clay) wrote and spoke at length about the hermeneutics of their practice and their methods. In the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a discourse is growing around public and practical theology in both military and healthcare chaplaincy; the other state context for chaplaincy, prisons, is almost entirely absent from that discourse. My fieldwork revealed both a desire and a lack of opportunity for reflection on practice.

Prison chaplaincy provides a lens for examining relations between church and state and the extent to which the state attempts to regulate, more or less overtly, religious practice. The statutory appointment of an Anglican chaplain to every prison in England and Wales first appears in legislation in 1773, reinforced in a series of gaol acts starting in 1823 and 1832. The impetus for religious ministry in prisons may be said to have originated with dissenters like John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, both of them only formally Anglican. The term “Anglican” is used in this thesis to denote only the COE and the CIW.

The fourth reason for the focus on Anglican chaplains is implicitly autobiographical insofar that I was chaplain to a number of prisons, licensed both in the COE and the CIW. I do not set out to tell my own story but perhaps by a process of *bricolage* to establish a context and vocabulary for it from the stories and reflections of other chaplains. I address issues facing the researcher who is also a practitioner in Chapter 3. There is also a question of practicability: this is a one person, self-funded project so there are limits to the amount of fieldwork which I could undertake and analyse. To have cast

my net over whole chaplaincy teams would have risked merely imitating the work of Todd and Tipton (2011), also conducted at Cardiff. Having explained the rationale of researching Anglican chaplains, I outline in *Appendix 11* an Anglican paradigm within which to locate the response data.

## **1.2 The intertwining of theological subject and sociological method**

This thesis is a study, using sociological methodology, of ordained Anglican prison chaplains doing theology. It draws together versions of Practical Theology and ethnography on the premise that they are congruent theory-sets which converge in this thesis. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews and limited observation in 32 prisons over a period from mid-2010 to early 2012, a time of uncertainty and structural change in the Prison Service chaplaincy.

The thesis is located in the field of practical theology; it can also, however, be read as a contribution to the sociology of work and occupation, forming a link between these two broad areas, much as the chaplain can be seen as a link between two national institutions, though liminal to both. More specifically, it is located in a strand of pastoral theology associated with Anton Boisen and the Clinical Pastoral Education movement, developed by Browning (1991), Selby (1983), Thompson (2008) and Graham, Walton & Ward (2005 & 2007) to Graham (2009) and the ethnographically informed work of Woodward (1998), Swift (2009), Todd (2009) and Becci (2012). The work is thus located in the pastoral line of practical theology but with strong resonance in the sociology of work and occupation. Fine (2007, 241) observes that, “occupations do not easily fit categories of work.” My work privileges the poetics of occupation through textualized *dicta* over – but not exclusive of – the political codification of chaplains’ “work” both in historical/legal terms (eg Prisons Act 1952, Prison Rules 1999) and the taxonomy of performance related targets by which management tries to assess and quantify “achievement” within a total business plan.

The distinct, innovative quality of this thesis arises from its focus on a group of clergy, self-defined both by occupation and denomination, and the extent

to which it draws upon the ethnographic tradition of sociology as found in the work of, *inter al*, Becker (1963), Fine (1996 & 2007), Willis (1977 & 2002) and Atkinson (2006). Anglican prison chaplains have been statutory appointments in English and Welsh prisons since the Gaol Act of 1823 but there has been no comprehensive ethnographically based study of them; my project embraces about 22% of the total group. The study shows where they sit in the field of practical theology and their unique, if uncomfortable, situation between two national institutions, the Anglican churches of England and Wales and Her Majesty's Prison Service.

This apparent dualism is less binary than it appears and I show how chaplains can and do subvert it (6.6.2). All salaried chaplains are located in a tension between their employer and their faith community, leaning more to one than to the other according to spatial and temporal circumstance. This is played out in ritual or quasi-ritual encounters (6.1 & 6.2) or reactively in one-off situations and in what Fine (2007, 238) calls "the informal procedures by which work gets done [which] belong to all forms of work." I show that the Anglican prison chaplain conducts a ministry which is public but hidden; "those undertakings have always been conducted to some extent *in public*" (Graham 2008, 16, original italics). I also show that such ministry is susceptible to the same theoretical analyses as session musicians (Becker 1963), meteorologists (Fine 2007) and opera singers (Atkinson 2006). Chaplains, then, embody within themselves two apparently contrasting value systems and cultures, neither of which is monocultural, being responsive to multifarious influences and traditions. Graham offers a summation of this:

The effects and dynamics of power, truth, reason, good and evil never exist as transcendent ideals; they remain to be embodied, enacted and performed in human communities as forms of bodily practice. So the deepest dynamics of the social, political and economic order are always incarnated into persons/bodies-in-relation. (Graham 2009, 84)

I originally intended to conduct a quantitative research project under the influence of Ranson, Bryman & Hinings seminal work (1977), several articles by Francis and the data-rich, positivist study by Jody Sundt (1997). At the same time I was reading accounts by 19<sup>th</sup> century practitioners such as Clay,

Kingsmill and Field. I resisted a suggestion that I might use the writings of Kierkegaard as a theoretical base, perceiving that the need was for a 21<sup>st</sup> century account of chaplains' ministry using their own words in dialogue with an informed outsider or a detached practitioner. Unlike a hegemonic system of theological principles or an outright positivist stance, this seemed more likely to yield the range of "rich data" (Charmaz 2006, 14) which comprise Geertz's "thick description" (Geertz 1973, 4ff) and Glaser & Strauss's "slices of data" (Glaser & Strauss 1968, 65). There is limited scope for extensive sampling and observation in prisons, however co-operative governors (sometimes) and chaplains (usually) would like to be. Therefore researchers must gather what they can from what is available. The chaplains' own voices, therefore, are important but need to be read or heard in the physical context of their ministry as far as practicable, necessarily in dialogue with the researcher. (I address issues of narrative in 3.2 and *Appendix 10*.) This locates an authorial stance mid-way between total non-intervention, and deployment of data to support my own narrative; my position is suggested by Richardson (1990, 28): "As qualitative researchers we can more easily write as situated, positioned authors, giving up, if we choose, our position of *authority* over the people we study, but not the responsibility of *authorship* of our texts." (Original italics.)

My research question became, "What do Anglican prison chaplains think they are doing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?" This generated an initial list of generic questions to be extended and refined for specific chaplains (3.1.4 & *Appendix 3*). Already, then, the theological was intertwining with the ethnographical; "the challenge is....to act in ways that bring method and purpose into alignment" (Gitlin, Siegel & Boru 1993, 191). Nevertheless, in the next section I indicate in more detail the nature of the theology which Anglican prison chaplains engage with as revealed in Parts 2 and 3 of the thesis.

### **1.3 Practical Theology and the living human document**

A model for the ministry of prison chaplains needs to encompass its largely face-to-face pastoral nature, to be grounded in the epistemology and able to

mesh with a complementary research methodology. There are a number of models for this. The broad area of Practical Theology (hereinafter PT) lends itself to individual enquiry and dialogue which yield classifiable conclusions without clinging to rigid orthodoxy, allowing for “many diverse participants, methods and concerns” (Woodward & Pattison 2000, 4). (As a model of pastoral practice I say more about this in 2.2.)

Such diversity militates against doctrinaire orthodoxy but there are, nevertheless, essential characteristics of PT which underpin its growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A version of these, set out by Woodward and Pattison (2000, 13), says that PT is, *inter al*, transformative, contextual, experiential, “often reflectively based”, dialectical and disciplined, concerned with theory, practice, situational realities, the “texts” of present experience, other disciplines and “society outside the religious community”. Such parameters embrace the chaplain’s encounters, setting them within the context both of the Church and the world outside the Church.

Graham, who identifies PT as a manifestation of post-modernity (2009, 153-158), stresses its nature as “a task at some level of Christian apologetics” and of “theological reflection on practice being capable of giving an account of itself to those beyond the community of faith” (2008, 16). The emphasis here is different from Woodward and Pattison who determine that PT is “*often reflectively based*” (my emphasis). The distinction is important because there is little, if any, evidence of, or opportunity for, purposive, structured reflection in Anglican prison chaplaincy, in contrast to prison chaplains of other faiths and denominations. There is, then, irony in Graham’s speculation that,

the boundaries between communities of faith and the secular world – of government, public policy, welfare and industry – is (*sic*) perhaps more permeable by virtue of establishment, whereby ministers and leaders of those denominations believe they have a responsibility not only to minister to the membership of their congregation but for “the cure of souls” of all those who inhabit the geographical area of their parishes. (Graham 2008, 13)

In the terms of this thesis, the irony resides in chaplains of the established faith not having access to reflective space “to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social...practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out.” (Kemmis 1993, 177). Nor do they have consistent contact with the Church (10.2) to share insight and receive insight in return (10.2), much less to communicate it beyond the Church. There are no local or regional provisions for Anglican chaplains to reflect in the ways suggested by Green (1990, 24-31) and Todd (2009, 45-46); none of the area or regional meetings which I observed made such provision and in sixteen years as a chaplain I experienced it only once.

A characteristic of most representations of PT is an element of reflection consequent upon earlier events and experience, and informing subsequent events. Its general absence from the practice of Anglican prison chaplaincy therefore suggests a depleted model of PT. Green (1990, 39) offers a precedent for this view, depicting a circle of “interweaving of action and reflection” which is broken so as to separate exploration of experience and reflection upon it from response and action:

This dividing of the cycle into two is a constant and real danger, for many theologians have started out with every intention of completing the whole cycle, but have then become immersed in reflection that they have forgotten to return to the action half of the diagram and they finish their theology with just reflection and fine words. (Green 1990, 39)

The opposite seems to be true of Anglican prison chaplaincy; chaplains appear to move from event/experience to response and action, omitting the stages of purposive exploration and reflection. They may and do reflect informally, privately and in prayer (Graham, Walton & Ward 2007, 80) but this lacks the elements of deepening their own resources, enriching the Church’s theology and being embraced by it. This finds a methodological parallel in the assertion “that generating grounded theory is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses.” (Glaser & Strauss 1968, 3) There is

also a heterotopic perspective in the mirror-like reversal where what is done is the same but opposite to the original proposal:

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (Foucault 1986, 24)

So the situation for Anglican prison chaplains is putatively the same as, but also opposite to that in the Church. As a version of PT their form of ministry appears deficient in comparison with theoretical models, though the deficiency does not detract from their everyday praxis as creators, innovators and executors of policy. This does not diminish Anglican prison chaplaincy as a version of PT. Pattison and Woodward's pragmatic taxonomy of dialectical features (Woodward & Pattison 2000, 13) recognises the tension between what is (reality) and what might be (ideal), as well as between theory and practice.

Despite the fracture of this form of PT the theological engagement of the chaplains can be located more precisely within the thread of pastoral theology stemming from Boisen's focus upon "the living human document": "He said, 'I have sought to begin not with the ready-made formulations contained in books but with the living human documents and with actual social conditions in all their complexity,'" (Asquith 1980, 86). Boisen's purpose was to build theology but his emphasis lies more upon the individual student or practitioner or small groups thereof than on the larger body of the church (Thompson 2008, 63-64). This is to see the prisoner/patient/subject as "a life-turned-into-text" (Graham, Walton & Ward 2007, 77) revealed in the dialogue of the pastoral event. In a later essay, Graham (2009, 151) reaffirms "hermeneutics which regard human action as akin to texts in the way they reflect and constitute truth-claims and values." More than this, though, she suggests a perspective which transcends hints for more effective ministry, namely "an entry point into a deeper apprehension of the very meaning of human existence." This is a bold assertion since it presupposes the discernment to read "the text" and its context without the impediment of

personal drivers such as prejudice or personal experience, a doubt which Graham entertains about Browning (Graham 2009, 150). It might also help to develop a metaphor of chaplain as ethnographer, though not in the instrumental sense implied by Moschella (2008, 40-41). Issues of pastoral theology are also raised in 2.2.

This section has located Anglican prison chaplains firmly within the field of Practical Theology, showing how their versions of pastoral ministry fall short of theoretical ideals at a systemic level, however committed and considered their practice. Nevertheless, I have also indicated that their practice is not inconsistent with the notion of the “living human document” as proposed by Boisen and extended by Graham, who finds in it a transcendence in the midst of the post-modern world. In the next section I survey some examples of the ethnographic practice and epistemology upon which I draw to elicit data, and indicate its appropriateness as a methodological strategy in the field of theology.

#### **1.4 Ethnography and the living human document**

I have outlined a methodology which interleaves Practical Theology with ethnography (1.1) and set out some characteristics of PT (1.2) which identify it as an appropriate location for what Anglican prison chaplains do. In this section I consider some features of ethnography which mesh with the PT characteristics and adduce examples of ethnographic studies both secular and theological. As I took the decision to avoid dominant theological systems, so I was also determined to avoid secular and methodological hegemonies which “can stand in the way of the possible invention of new system perspectives working up from ethnography” (Marcus 1986, 172) .

At an early stage I had thought of using a Marxist theoretical base as a distancing tool and to establish a dialectic: “In the field of punishment, the church acts as an adjunct of the bureaucracy....His identification with administration, the prisoners’ traditional enemy renders the chaplain’s ministrations largely ineffective.” (Rusche & Kirchheimer 2003, 156-157) This is a tenable view but it threatened to pre-configure dialogue and

significantly circumscribe respondents' potential breadth of response; I shall, however, reference Willis (1981 & 2002), himself a Marxist theorist, in relation to the practice of ethnography.

Marxism is advanced by Pattison as a critical reflective framework for analysing pastoral care in a public total institution in *Pastoral Care and Liberation Theology* (Pattison 1994). His stance, based on a reading of south American liberation theologians, is characterised by the proposal of mental illness as being socially constructed in a society where the interests of those who have power and wealth are served at the expense of those who have only their labour to sell. Pastoral care as exercised by chaplains is individualistic and focussed on psychotherapy. This individualisation, suggests Pattison, obscures the social causes of mental illness and relocates them in the patient so that chaplains' pastoral care amounts to collusion with an oppressive system. His thesis is that pastoral care needs both to be liberated from some of its own practical and theoretical narrowness, and to become socially and politically aware and committed (Pattison 1994, 6). He acknowledges a continuing place for individual ministry and does not hold chaplains wholly culpable, citing their powerlessness and isolation in the face of huge historic structures. A major factor in such isolation, he says, is that:

Churches seem content to nominate or approve chaplains for appointment...and then to forget about them, simply being grateful that the state is paying their salaries....There is thus little active, critical support for chaplains in their pastoral work which might help to radicalise their perspectives and practice. (Pattison 1994, 205)

I return to these specific points as they affect prison chaplains in Chapters 10 & 11.3.1. Pattison remarks that "the personal sincerity, commitment, motivation, and goodwill of individual pastors is not in question here," (174) but neither does he entirely exculpate them; the repeated "Chaplains have not" and "Chaplains have failed" (190-191) suggests something supine if not actually collusive.

There is no similar reflection and analysis in connection with prison chaplains of any denomination, let alone Anglican. My work is an attempt to redress that situation, though using a different methodology from Pattison.

As indicated above, however, I too adopt a critical reflective framework which, if not rigorously orthodox Marxism, is influenced by it. Pattison outlines a definition of the psychiatric hospital in historic and social contexts (113-116); something similar, though briefer, is needed as a touchstone for my own findings:

Central to these structural configurations is the material role of the modern prison, as a state institution, intimately connected with the reproduction of an unequal and unjust social order divided by the social lacerations of class, gender, 'race', age and sexuality..... It is an institution which retains a deeply embedded ideological presence in the interpellated, individual subjectivity and collective consciousness of the governing class and a professional elite (Sim 2009, 8-9).

Sim is an abolitionist, which I am not, and his direct roots tend more to Foucault than Marx while mine are informed more by Wacquant's theories of carceral hyperinflation and "welfare into work fare" (Wacquant 2009, 58-64 & 82-84). Nevertheless, Sim's summary represents something of my own critical framework and how I perceive socially rooted critiques to interact with those which are theologically derived. It has, though, nothing to do with the views expressed or privately held by the people whom I interviewed. So there is at least a perceptible correlation between Pattison's standpoint and mine, although in my case the political construction remains part of the backdrop of personal drivers and biases.

Mental hospitals and prisons are both identified by Goffman as total institutions. What is feasible in one, however, may not be in the other; what is desired or desirable in one may be less so in the other; it may be that chaplains in hospitals are less constrained than their prison service equivalents who are paid civil servants. Listening as a self-standing activity is a case in point, identified by ten respondents as a key activity for chaplains (4.4 & Becci 2011ii, 78 & Becci, Bovay et al 2011, 4); this is in contrast to the more structured psychotherapeutic approaches of chaplains in psychiatric settings. One of my respondents explains that listening of itself without extension into further action may well save a life (4.4). A clear point of difference between hospitals and state prisons is the status of those who work in them, hospitals being more thoroughly and variously

professionalised and not directly part of the civil service structure of which state-run prison staff are part . While a Marxist or Waquantian analysis may be applied to prisons and assist in formulating comments and conclusions, neither suggests how chaplains, were they so minded, could begin to influence any debate about criminal justice and the role and nature of incarceration, especially in the context of populist and governmental rhetoric.

Pattison's work, then, helps to explain why I have not adopted his perspective. Instead I shall focus on the development of aspects which Pattison considers potentially obstructive, especially the version of pastoral theology outlined in 1.2. Like him, I see the role of the churches as at best largely indifferent to, and at worst, negligent of those about whom Jesus had most to say, the poor, the excluded and the oppressed. My stance is that, if establishment retains any active significance, the COE should tap into the experience of its chaplains (not only, indeed, in prisons) to substantiate nationally a prophetic stand on issues of systemic injustice of all kinds. There is no necessary reason why "the spiritual, transcendent and liturgical" (Pattison 1994, 200) should impede a thrust for justice and equality. That is why it is important that this thesis should also be seen in the secular context of the sociology of work and the continuing discourse of ethnography.

Although I refer to Bourdieu below (also in 4.6.2 & 4.6.3) I have not used his scheme of field/habitus interaction as a theoretical basis because, again, this seemed likely to circumscribe too closely the range of prompt and response, restricting the scope for respondents to share in steering the dialogue. I reference him, however, alongside Foucault (1986) and Cohen and Taylor (1972) in discussing temporal and spatial influences upon chaplains.

Similarly, I eventually decided against a Foucauldian perspective. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, Foucault's theory in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) conceives of blocks of people or interest groups; hence he characterizes chaplains as one of "a whole army of technicians who took over from the executioner" (Foucault 1979, 11) who had to "fill in their

observations on each inmate.” (179, 250) Again, this is a limiting basis from which to work in that it precludes a methodology developed around an individual person centred strategy. Secondly, Foucault appears to veto the possibility of resistance from inmates, thereby rendering a dialogic relationship impossible. In this respect, the chapter title *Docile bodies* (1979, 135) is telling, whereas Goffman fully recognises the active “underlife” of institutions expressed in “secondary adjustments” (Goffman 1961, 172-175). Godderis (2006, 255-267), writing about food in prison, suggests the potential range of resistance available to prisoners.

Nevertheless, Foucault is part of my theoretical framework on the basis of his paper *Other Spaces* (1986); I outline the relevance and value of this in 2.3, 3.1.2 and 4.6.1. The paper precisely captures the reality and unreality, connectedness and disjointure, neither here nor there, and the illusion of entry over against actual, physical entry. This helped to make sense of my own roles as both practitioner and researcher so that they can be seen as both alternative *and* complementary. Foucault’s concept of “slices of time” and the intersecting of time and place led me via Becci (2012, 85-88) to Bourdieu’s observation about time as a signifier of power (Bourdieu 2000, 230-231). The concept of heterotopia can also be thought of as congruent with Turner’s use of the concept of liminality, originated by van Gennep (1909) (2.3 & 6.2) and applicable to the idea of normative *communitas* as a feature of the “underlife” of institutional resistance. This strengthens the dialogic construct of the carceral context and of chaplaincy which happens within it and strongly suggests a researcher/practitioner dialectic between researcher and respondents, and internally by the researcher. I discuss the theoretical framework further in 2.3 and 6.1. Questions about practical aspects of the practitioner/researcher duality are considered in 3.1.4/5/7/8.

This methodology was operationalized through semi-structured interviews where initial areas of inquiry became channelled into generic and, subsequently, into more specific questions and prompts. How this played out in practice is the subject of 3.1.12 and *Appendices 3 & 4*.

Ethnographical theories are central to my data and the conclusions and observations which emerge from them. They inform my work in ways analogous to the models of PT, informed by theory and contributory to it, even if there is slippage between the ideal and the reality. Clifford has shown how ethnography is a valid and valuable approach in liminal situations especially where apparently conflicting value sets are in close proximity to each other:

Ethnography is actively situated *between* powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilisations, cultures, classes, races and gender. Ethnography decodes and recodes....it describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes. (Clifford 1986, 2, italics in original)

This operates both in the sphere of methodology and in the respondents' context. My engagement with ethnography is positioned between total non-intervention and total authorial control: it also sits between and links the apparently contradictory value sets of the prison and of the church. Chaplains themselves embody these dichotomies and, as practitioners, could be regarded in some sense as ethnographers (cp Atkinson 2006, 33), but also as the living human document when in respondent roles. Ethnography, unlike theory-driven systems of inquiry, can explore the fractures and discontinuities both between value sets and within them; like grounded theory its fundamental characteristic is not a positioning theory, so that respondents can steer the interview. At the same time it allows theory to be built into the co-construction both as process and post-reflection upon respondent engagement. So ethnography may be thought of here as an intercultural engagement in that it privileges the co-constructed event as a site where theory is or should be built in both theology and sociology. How these events were anticipated and constructed emerges in *3.1.12* and *Appendices 3 & 4*.

The same cross references also illuminate the researcher's reflection on the textualized responses insofar that they are not only jointly driven but also strategized following reflection upon previous dialogues. Thus, *Appendix 4a*, reproduces Barbara's interview which was preceded by two interviews with

other respondents in which restorative justice figured prominently. In *Appendix 4b* Dennis reflects, *inter al*, on vernacular religious practice and on differences between working with male and female prisoners; both of these subjects had occurred in other, earlier interviews. The aim was not so much to cross check – differences did emerge but I have not pursued them here – as to deepen and enrich the data in the light of what had gone before. In both cases the data would have been even richer had I included contextual detail to give “thick description”, but this would reveal the identity of the prison and thence the person; I have, though, included limited detail of HMP Grimley, where Dennis works, to suggest something of the hostility which I (and he) encountered. The post-engagement reflection and its application was enabled by a process of in vivo coding, the developing and refining of which is evidenced in 3.1.13 and *Appendix 5*.

The role of researchers and its political potential cannot be ignored in the process of co-construction. I laid the groundwork for each encounter, evoked response and reflection and subsequently reflected on the outcome: I analysed and contextualised the data gathered from the living text (the living human document) and translated them through transcription (3.1.12) into a textualized form, one of several possible renderings. In this sense it could be said that I completed the circle which is broken in Green’s diagrammatic circle of action and reflection (Green 1990, 39) by initiating a reflective process which feeds subsequent encounters. It is capable of stimulating further reflection to inform and enrich future encounters between chaplains and prisoners and between researchers and respondents. The researcher thus becomes, if not the progenitor, the midwife of the missing elements of reflection and enrichment, if only by proxy. This thesis, then, not only explores a version of PT but is itself a version of it in that it subscribes to and completes the cyclical process of action, exploration and reflection feeding back into action.

My use of ethnography is an integrated exercise in studying people who live and work out theology; while I make it clear that this is not a purposeful exercise in autobiography, still less in autoethnography, nevertheless I too

am implicated as a practitioner with potential authorial and editorial power. Following Richardson (1990,28 & 1.2 ) again, I choose to moderate this as far as possible while not abdicating from authorial responsibility: Clifford has observed that, “Dialogic modes are not, in principle, autobiographical; they need not lead to hyper self-consciousness or self-absorption” (Clifford 1986, 15).

### **1.5 The convergence of practical theology and ethnography**

There are precedents for the practice of ethnography in the service of theology. Swift (2009) writes as a NHS chaplain, another practitioner researcher in a bounded if not total institution. In his account ethnography takes its place alongside historical, social and political elements; it is both more contextualised and less prominent than in my account. He recurs to an epistemology of chaplaincy to realize, for example, issues of power and marginalisation (2009, 119). A significant difference between Swift’s work and mine is his use of autoethnography because “the challenge was to find a methodology for collecting contemporary data on practice that did not disturb unduly the very work I wished to observe.” (Swift 2009, 106). Like Gilliat-Ray (2011), I experienced unease about embodying “otherness” in one-to-one situations. Another difference, contextual but important, is the contrast between the staff groups in hospitals and prisons. Prison chaplains seem more concerned about relationality than professional status (5.2); NHS chaplains, however, operate in a highly professionalised environment so that questions of pay and status seem more important than for prison chaplains (2009, 42-43). (Changes in prison chaplains’ pay and grading implemented in 2012 may change this.) Swift’s tightly focussed and richly contextualised use of ethnography is a component equal with others whereas ethnography is the fundamental organising principle in my work.

Broadly comparable with Swift’s work is that of Woodward (1998)who also uses ethnography to complement a range of historical, documentary and analytical data relating to institutional and political contexts; he, too, focuses on the professionalization of clergy and chaplains (1998, 40-52), supporting

this with ethnographically derived data (1998, 173). His use of semi-structured questions is similar to mine and yields comparable conclusions in such areas as power and authority (1998, 155-187), and an apparent absence of theological perspective:

It is significant to note the relative absence, in the chaplains' responses, of a theological critique of this process. There is an embracing of the language of the health care business without any theological critique. Very few of the interviewees spoke openly about God, or provided any substantial indication of how they used their theological training or indeed any but the most general beliefs, in their work. (1998, 275)

In this area, Woodward's work and mine are complementary; they explore in detail the frequent alienation from the institution although Woodward does not, as I do, explore relations with mainstream churches. He does, however, allude to "chaplains' critical self-reflection" (1998, 280); this suggests that more structured opportunities are no more available in the NHS context than in prison chaplaincy. Woodward arrives at a comprehensive range of conclusions by employing ethnography as one among a number of research strategies.

Swift and Woodward deploy ethnography as part of a wider repertoire of research methods whereas ethnography is the organising principle for my entire project, supported by a measure of documentary and historical reference (9.1-9.6 & 10.4-10.5).

Todd (2009) writes about "the emergence of a hybrid methodology" (Todd 2009, 19) much as I refer to the intertwining of theology and ethnography. He prefers the term "action research" for his data-gathering fieldwork (2009, 44), identifying himself as participant observer. The major difference between Todd's work and mine is his use of discourse analysis as an analytical instrument to probe the actions and reflections of his two groups. More than Swift or Woodward, Todd explores his own role both as practitioner of Bible study and as participant in the dynamics of the groups being studied. His study is therefore more closely contextualised by the features of the activity and the epistemology of action research.

My stance has been as far as possible to step back from my role as practitioner and possibly unexamined perspectives by adopting models of ethnography from outside theological or chaplaincy frameworks. I have already hinted at this in 1.3 mentioning Clifford, Marcus, Tyler and Richardson. It becomes more explicit in 2.3 and 6.1 where I refer to the literature of total institutions and spatial geography as providers of a referential framework for the meta-concept of prison. I also develop there an equivalent framework of reference for interpreting the actions of chaplains.

This contribution to the PT discourse takes as its models secular ethnographies such as those by Becker (1963), Willis (1977 & 2002), Fine (1996 & 2007) and Atkinson (2006). Willis is, perhaps, an unlikely guide, having a monolithic Marxist theory behind him and a cultural point to prove about “the lads” in his study. The grand theory never actually appears on stage; Willis has said, “We are not interested in grand theory for its own sake,” (Willis 2002, 398). Although it informs the second, analytical part of *Learning to Labour* (1977), it is present more as a referent than as a measure. As Marcus puts it, “The Marxist system is there, so to speak, to be invoked. A commitment to it by the ethnographer makes it available as an image of system worked into the ethnography,” (1986, 173). Systematic theology and “God talk” stand behind my interviews (at some distance) but are rarely invoked. I was more concerned to elicit responses to my research question, “What do Anglican prison chaplains in England and Wales think they are doing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?”; what emerged was the variety of ways in which Anglican chaplaincy is socially constructed (or, occasionally, not constructed) in prisons and in the churches, and between those two bodies and their respective value sets. In this I echo Willis’s *Afterword* to the American edition of *Learning to Labor* (1981, 200-221): “I was aiming to show some of the symbolic and constructed forms of a culture which are created by concrete individuals in groups – but which are nevertheless specific to themselves,” (1981, 217). Willis might be writing about PT when he says, “Ethnography and theory should be conjoined to produce a concrete sense of the social as internally sprung and dialectically produced.” (1981, 395).

Further possible illumination outwith theology of the Anglican chaplain's work can be found in Atkinson's ethnography of performance:

The dramaturgical work of the opera studio and the theatre can be understood as a kind of practical ethnography in its own right, while the anthropologist or sociologist tries to make sense of how participants engage with the work of opera. The opera is not to be found just in the score. It is distributed across a number of texts and sites. (Atkinson 2006, 33)

Without forcing spurious equivalences, this allows the possibility of the chaplain as ethnographer, not only as observer of living human documents but as one who works in multiple sites, chapel, cell, reception area, healthcare and "block". The passage also allows the range of more conceptual sites such as liturgy – more and less formal - institutional orders (PSOs), sacred texts and faith related literature. In short, it can operate as a metaphor for creative, multipart work within a tightly circumscribed area.

Despite Tyler's assertion (1986, 134) of the incompatibility of post modernism and "the transcendent", Fine (2007) offers an elegant analysis of meteorologists doing "futurework" (2007,99-135) as public employees attempting to interpret the uncertain and unpredictable forces of nature at a point where scientific technologies intersect with government, corporate and public interests.

I examine how public scientists strive for autonomy and hope to serve according to their beliefs of what this public needs, while operating under a set of constraints imposed upon them through an organizational hierarchy and by their demanding audiences. (Fine 2007, 238)

Its relevance as a model of how ethnography might encompass theology lies in the antithesis between the scientific/technological and the mystical/magical elements of forecasting. Fine's ethnography, gathered around the data, *is* the narrative whereas Becci (2012) uses ethnography to support her narrative about the nexus of church and state.

I have argued in this first chapter that non-theological modes of sociological inquiry and analysis are not only compatible with an action or event based

mode of theology, founded in the person rather than in theory, they share characteristics so that the two systems of thought and practice can be seen to intermesh. Even if the model of PT in Anglican prison chaplaincy is fractured ethnography can go some way towards mending that fracture.

In the next chapter I shall survey research and theories in the literature more immediately surrounding Anglican chaplains and prisons as institutions.

## **1.6 Contents and structure of the thesis**

### Part 1 Context

Chapter 1 outlines the epistemological context and configuration of the thesis; it also, together with *Appendix 11*, provides a brief deconstruction of “Anglican” as a reference point for its use in the data sets. Chapter 2, through a survey of related literature, sets markers for church establishment, chaplaincy, pastoral care and the theory of total institutions applied to prisons. Chapter 3 sets out my methodology and addresses issues which may face the practitioner/ researcher. Literature relating to methodology is cited here rather than in Chapter 2.

### Part 2 Findings (i)

Parts 2 and 3 are both data driven, especially Part 2 which deals with modes of relationality within the prisons.

Chapter 4 sets out and comments upon the main aspects of work with prisoners which respondents seemed to have in common, even when there was a range of perspectives. Chapter 5 arises from respondents’ perceptions of their relationship with other prison staff, implying a view of where and how they locate themselves within the operational map of the prison. Chapter 6, drawing upon the second part of Chapter 2, attempts to establish a vocabulary of ritual and ritual-like processes which will express both the secularly bureaucratic aspects of chaplains’ practice and more specifically faith related activities. Chapter 7 takes questions of gender as a basis for chaplains’ relations with prisoners and with staff.

### Part 3 Findings (ii)

Although Part 3, comprising Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11, is also essentially data driven; it also serves as a commentary or reflection on some of the issues raised in Part 2. Chapter 8 tightens the focus to similarities and dissimilarities between ministry in prisons and in parishes, the inherited system of Anglican ministry, as chaplains perceive them. Chapter 9 draws upon documentary sources in addition to the research data to underpin respondents' perceptions of their identity as Anglicans in a carceral environment. This leads into Chapter 10 which also draws from data and document to locate chaplains within the Church, as Chapter 5 implied their location in prisons. Chapter 11 synthesizes issues raised in Parts 2 and 3; it considers the implications of my research for Prison Chaplaincy headquarters, for chaplains themselves and for the Church at episcopal level. It also suggests areas for further, more detailed research.

In the next chapter I shall survey research and theories in the literature more immediately surrounding Anglican chaplains and prisons as institutions.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE SURVEY & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	Establishment: “A clergyman of the Church of England	26
2.2	Chaplaincy and pastoral care	33
2.3	How total is total?	39

In the first part of this chapter I survey the field within which the slender corpus of literature about prison chaplains is located; that which refers to Anglican chaplains is almost invisible. I shall consider the work of Beckford and Gilliat-Ray (both separately and jointly), Becci and, in the USA, the work of Sundt (and her associates) and Hicks. I also identify strands in the epistemology of pastoral care to problematize two aspects of prison chaplaincy. In the third part I shall refer to sociological and anthropological texts in order to devise an interpretative framework for the research data. This chapter, however, does not embrace every work referred to; references are introduced throughout subsequent chapters, particularly to the epistemology of gender in Chapter 7 and to parish ministry in Chapter 8. Methodological works are the focus of Chapter 3. “Religion in prison is embedded in a variety of discourses all ascribing religion particular roles and locations.” (Becci 2011, 65)

Chaplains leave only the faintest footprint on the literature of imprisonment after the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are to be found momentarily in a variety of genres from the didactic/(auto)biographical (Clay, 1861; Field, 1848; Kingsmill, 1854; Horsley 1886; Rickards, 1920; Ball, 1956) and the frankly hagiographical (Cooke, 1983; Powe, 1996 & 1997) to the fictional (Chesterton, 1927; James, 2011). They appear in local histories (Goodall, 2001, 2005, 2006; Ireland, 2007) but much of the potential archive of prison chaplaincy is, if not destroyed, not archived and only randomly accessible, being contained in conference reports, intra-departmental documents, correspondence and journals. Crewe (2009), in a richly detailed ethnography of HMP Wellingborough, does not even mention chaplaincy.

Only two chaplain-authored, book length accounts seem to be extant. Atherton (1987) is a brief history combined with reflections on his own ministry as a RC chaplain; as such it was recommended reading for new full time chaplains. Shaw (1995) reflects as another RC chaplain, based in New York State, on the office of chaplain. His work is partly narrative, partly analytical, and is frequently racy and amusing; he does, though, cite a conference address by Stoltz (1978) to which I return in 10.5.

Much of the discourse around prison chaplaincy includes chaplains incidentally in wider studies of the role of religion in prison or rehabilitation (Allard 2009; Burnside, Adler et al 2005; Camp, Klein-Saffran et al 2006; Carm 2002; Clear, Hardyman et al 2000; Clear & Sumter 2002; Cullen, Pealer et al 2008; Dammer 2002; Sullivan 2009; Van Denend 2007; Maruna 2011; Maruna et al 2006). There is a nascent literature around Muslim prison chaplaincy emanating from work at Cardiff University (Gilliat-Ray 2008; Ali & Gilliat-Ray 2012) and a concomitant discourse around chaplaincy in a multi-faith context (Ford 2011; Todd 2011).

The largest agglomerations of research around prison chaplains are those authored and co-authored by Sundt, and by Beckford, both singly and with Gilliat.

Sundt's PhD thesis (1997) is a descriptive account quantitatively based on questionnaire responses; it examines chaplains' role in the prison, their correctional orientation and their affective responses to work. The lack of fieldwork and respondents' voices (which she acknowledges and explains) means that there is no sense of quotidian interaction with place and other people; discussion is based on regression indices of the kind lamented by Young (2011, 18) at the expense of the frequently eloquent and accomplished narrative of practitioners themselves. That said, Sundt produces an informative list of chaplains' activities which, like the thesis itself, indicates differences between practice in the USA – though not in federal institutions – and England and Wales. The greater emphasis on structured programmes and formal counselling are two examples. She concludes, surprisingly, that

“there is little evidence among the findings to support the expectation that the role of the chaplain is ambiguous” having identified “providing assistance to other correctional employees” as a “less frequently performed” duty, (1997, 266-267) and that “chaplains balance the biblical call to minister to inmates with the need to function in an institution of social control.”(1997, 272) Her later work is equally descriptive, finding “Catholics and those who reject a hellfire orientation more likely to endorse rehabilitation.”(Sundt & Cullen 2002, 381) This was interesting in the light of an unprompted digression about human rights by Daniel (3.2), a conservative evangelical, “but socially liberal” chaplain.

Unlike Sundt, Hicks (2008, 415-416) identifies an element of ambiguity or strain in the chaplain’s role. Her findings are methodologically significant, being based on semi-structured interviews. Her later paper (Hicks 2012) investigates “Prison chaplains as risk managers”, a survey of chaplains’ own sense of personal danger, rather than institutional security, as “risk” would be interpreted in England and Wales. The particular interest of this is that none of my respondents talked of perceived threat to themselves despite carrying keys and a radio, being trained in breakaway techniques and having officers and an alarm bell in chapel services. Hicks’ article implies that my respondents internalize security awareness more than hers.

## **2.1 Establishment: “A clergyman of the Church of England”.**

The current discourse around chaplaincy in English and Welsh prisons originated in the work of Beckford and Gilliat (1998); this highlighted the dominant, privileged role of the COE as the established church in the broad constitutional context and more specifically in prison chaplaincy. The report comments on “deep divisions” amongst COE chaplains about meeting the needs of prisoners of other faiths. (1998, 57) Such divisions are apparent, if not prominent, in my data gathered twelve years later and traceable to the separate strands of ecclesiology mentioned in Chapter 1. The authors acknowledge the goodwill and facilitation of many individual Anglican chaplains (1998, 209-210) but question in detail the principle of “brokerage”

where provision and resources are determined by the disposition of the Anglican chaplain. Subsequently, Gilliat-Ray (2008, 150) has implied a diminution of Anglican chaplains' decisive influence over the ministry of other chaplains, suggested by "greater 'ownership' of chaplaincy than was previously conceivable among part-time visiting ministers back in the 1990s." Beckford (2007,279) also acknowledges a reorientation of prison chaplaincy but notes residual tensions, especially around other "minority" faiths. Some representatives, however, saw the COE "as a powerful source of protection against a potentially unsympathetic state," (2007, 273), a point of view also expressed by an imam in a focus group organised by me and conducted by Andrew Todd. In an earlier piece Beckford (1999, 679 & 683), applying rational choice theory, refers to similar arguments but draws contrasting inferences; "religious vitality would be greater if the subsidy to the Church of England were removed and if a free market in religion were created," but

The virtual monopoly enjoyed by the Church of England provides the kind of opportunities for other faiths to participate in prison chaplaincy which would not be realistically within their grasp in a totally free market. (1999, 680)

It is salutary, though, to remember the episcopal opposition to the Sheffield Industrial Mission, decisive in bringing about its demise. (Mantle 2000, 87-92)

Eight years later Beckford is able to note "transition towards multi faith policies" and reducing the salience of brokerage (2007, 279), indicating a process begun rather than fulfilled. Five years on he finds that "Christian" chaplains still controlled some chaplaincy committees and budgets and that many prison staff still regarded the Anglican as "the" chaplain (2012, 117), a point made in different ways by three respondents in 8.1 & 8.2.

Up to and including his 2012 chapter, Beckford explores "chaplaincy and contention" in a largely Anglican/Muslim framework, explained by the status of Anglican chaplaincy and the proportion of prisoners who are Muslim, 12.2% in 2010.(2013,6) Indeed, in one prison a RC chaplain complained to

me that, “the Anglicans and the Muslims have got it stitched up between them.” Beckford’s 2013 paper, however, written in a Canadian context, no longer writes of decisive influence by Anglican chaplains so much as the defining of legitimate religious practice by prison authorities, encompassing faiths of numerically smaller representation.

While Gilliat-Ray has focussed more upon the unfolding of Muslim chaplaincy and the contestation of shared sacred space, Beckford has continued to explore the ways in which states attempt both to define and confine religious practice. While both identify issues in chaplaincy there remains a need for practitioners’ perspectives on their quotidian experience.

Becci’s guiding question about “The way in which the meaning of religion is constructed in the context of relationships of meaning and institutionalized power relations,” (Becci 2012, 23-24) or Sullivan’s observation that prisons are “places where one cannot get away from the state’s relationship to religion” (Sullivan 2009,6) both serve as lenses to refract Cameron’s words about “dealing with” radicalization through chaplaincy. (1.2)

I argue in 6.3, 6.5 & 6.6 that the Anglican chaplain constructs forms of religious practice both with prisoners and with staff; this, however, needs to be held in tension with attempts by “the state” to shape and control religion; Cameron’s comments could be read almost as an intention to collude with “reasonable” Muslims in devising a politically defined theology and set of practices. Liebling & Arnold (2012, 421) find that officially appointed imams may encounter resistance in checking extremist ideologies, citing “rejection of the authority of ‘prison Imams’ by ideological leaders.” Even so, Cameron’s words reveal an assumption that the state can use religion in prison as a vehicle for transformation and social control, however slight the evidence may be. The assumption echoes claims made for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Separate System in which COE chaplains were thought to lead felons to redemption and rehabilitation, seeming also to ignore the *Prevent* programme, which provided extra funding for imams in prisons, the

development of Cambridge Muslim College and the Islamic Foundation at Markfield.

Beckford has charted the trajectory of prison chaplaincy and Anglican chaplaincy in particular from a position of decisive influence to a more equal and demographically representative alignment, indicating how the State helps to configure religion in prison in a process of co-construction with religious authorities.

Both Becci and Beckford, then, provide an interpretive context for Cameron's words from which it can be inferred that a socially acceptable version of Islam could be established within institutional boundaries much as, it might be added, the COE and its chaplains had been adapted to the carceral context.

The establishment of the COE has been expounded in detail by Doe (1996, 8-10) and its history and dynamics set out by Avis (2001, 18-23). Avis nuances the concept of establishment but uses his data to justify and defend the COE's national status (Avis 2001,36); Percy does likewise, even adducing Beckford and Gilliat-Ray to do so (Percy 2001, 99-100). Doe, however, provides my working reference for establishment:

The terms and incidents of establishment are expressed in the fact that state-made law places upon the Church of England a series of rights and duties which are not applicable to other churches..... establishment is produced by a fundamental identification of the Church of England with the state, the monarch being the head of each. (1996,9)

Certain other features of the COE's establishment which distinguish it from other differently established churches are itemised by Beckford and Gilliat (1998,205). I comment further on other aspects of the COE in 9.2.

Becci (2012, 14-21) offers the view that "the control of beliefs and religious practices has not disappeared but has passed from the religious organisations to the state," arguing that the development of religion in modernity is part of "an increase in and a widening of the state's domination of society." (2012, 15) She argues that as churches and faith groups have lost

communal influence, religion has become more susceptible to state manipulation through establishment.

As soon as the state establishes some religions and not others, the relationship between it and the established religions influences the experience and location of religion more generally. The state distributes privileges and channels the presence of religion in its institutions. (2012,18)

This leads Becci to the paradoxical observation that prison chaplaincy may be one of a few pockets in secular society where religious practice can develop more freely: “At the same time, however, through its very location within the total institution, this space may also easily develop into a space of control.” (2012, 112) The irony, then, is that chaplaincy, both as topographical and inter-personal location, may be perceived as a safe, freer place in prison, as a number of my respondents aver, but it remains, nevertheless a controlled and contested space, “freedom in deprivation”.(2012,79) Todd (2013,147) also finds an association of office and place as “neutral”. Becci’s assertions resonate in England and Wales, whose model of establishment is long established but different from German or Danish models being, arguably, more embedded in the apparatus of government.

This is significant because it suggests that Anglican chaplains in English and Welsh prisons function within an establishment framework developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when even the official recognition of RC chaplains occurred only some 40 years after the passing of the Test and Corporation acts. By comparison, the incorporation of Muslim chaplains into prisons and the national structure has been achieved remarkably quickly in the face of strident Islamophobia. My data suggest, however, that at local level some Muslim chaplains are expected to assume a set of processes developed by Anglicans over two centuries. At least two respondents, George and Claudia, (9.9) suggest that Muslim chaplains need to adapt to Christian (if not specifically Anglican) pastoral practice. Other respondents adhere to constitutional and universalist principles, suggesting that theories of faith establishment are worked out in practice, rather than theory or dictat.

The breadth of Becci's referential frame contrasts with Macarthur's (2003) more tightly circumscribed focus on New South Wales and "Britain", though effectively England. Whereas Macarthur combines "perspectives from both social science and religious writings" (2003,30) Becci's approach is rooted in a sociological epistemology in which ethnographical data are prominent but, "I shall not make a detailed analysis of the innumerable quotes but rather use them illustratively, as if they were participating in telling my story." (2012, 23) This contrasts with Macarthur's sometimes rather binary, though amply supported, distinction between secular and religious functions, using the exile of Israel as a metaphor to underpin his location of the chaplain's reduced status (2003, 293-294). He concludes that the chaplain's presence is largely token, showing that the state has discharged its obligation to religious observance:

The prison chaplain, even though he (*sic*) is largely irrelevant to the prisoner, performs a useful symbolic function for the prison by his presence....whether the chaplain does anything religious or not is not really an issue for the state, it is his presence that is useful. (2003,337)

This generalisation is at odds with Beckford's observations about contact and availability (Beckford 2001, 374-375).

Macarthur argues that chaplains have become syncretised, that they have foregone the supernatural elements of their ministry and "adopted social science concepts and practices" in a search for relevance (2003,253). It is difficult to uphold assertions about irrelevance and ministerial practice without reference to the practitioners and their "clients". Ironically, Becci's more contextualised anthropological approach says more about the immediacy of relations between chaplains and prisoners. At the same time, her exploration of issues around church establishment in Europe sets parameters for the status of the COE; Macarthur takes these as given. He makes no detailed analysis of chaplains' location in a plural society nor of women chaplains. His metaphor of journey from exile to Armageddon is arresting but does not, finally, tell us much about the practice of chaplaincy in prisons.

Becci, too, like Macarthur, charts (in French) the change in chaplains' work but her analysis, based on Swiss data, seeks out chaplains' new field of operation, regaining some of their lost functions but no longer functioning as "le bras droit de la direction devant qui tout le monde fait des courbettes," the management's right arm compelling obedient respect (2011i, 5, my paraphrase). Like Foucault (1979, 11 & 250) and Forrester (2000, 79 & 86) she recognises that chaplaincy is caught up in the exercise of control (Becci 2011i, 5). This statement is echoed at transnational level in later chapters of her book, where it can be inferred that the chaplain's mode of working is contained within the overall security strategy of the individual prison. It is not surprising that managements prefer it to be like that. (2011i,5) Whereas, though, Macarthur finds chaplains to be in exile (2003,340) Becci reveals a role which is independent of management structure, and values people independently of their actions (2011i,4 &14). At the centre of that role is the listening function (2011ii, 78) separated from formal programmes aimed at rehabilitation. A particular aversion to psychologists by one of her respondents is echoed in my interviews with Roger (3.2), Colin (5.2) and in Todd & Tipton (2011, 29). On the question of chaplains' neutrality as perceived by prisoners, Becci indicates differences between different administrations, though not the UK. She argues that chaplains can negotiate an independent role in prisons encompassing both pastoral and spiritual care and offers an outline definition of each:

Pastoral care..... refers to the activity through which the churches reach out to the secular world and to its suffering and less privileged parts in particular, to provide moral, ethical and spiritual guidance. Through the action of "comforting those in need" the boundary between the religious and the secular becomes blurred: pastoral care is a moral action that aims to keep the individual integrated in a particular context. For the established religions, pastoral care is thus in line with the aims that state and church pursue jointly, while the notion of spiritual care refers primarily to the individual's needs in the spiritual realm, not to the institution. (2012, 17)

Her broad distinction underpins my own research data (4.5) although my conclusions will question the extent to which the COE and the CIW consistently "reach out" through the ministry of Anglican chaplains. The

statement is carefully nuanced to avoid polarisation between the religious and the secular. Campbell offers a more holistic definition as “that activity within the ministry of the Church, which is centrally concerned with promoting the well-being of individuals and communities.... Its specific functions are healing, sustaining, reconciling, guiding and nurturing,” (Pattison 1994,15). Todd & Tipton observe that “most chaplains cited their pastoral work as more important than their explicitly religious duties.” (2011, 21)

All these comments provide a context in which to assess the perspectives drawn by chaplains themselves and to suggest possible locations for chaplains on a spectrum between independent operator defined by not being prison officers or psychologists (Todd & Tipton 2011, 25) and employees of the state. These can apply to chaplains of all faiths and denominations but Doe’s definition of COE establishment locates the Anglican chaplain at a point where the policies of the state and its agencies intersect with the declared mission of the church and its expression in ministry. It is at this point of intersection that Anglican chaplaincy is socially constructed both at national and local level. In the light of articles and correspondence in *The Tablet* (1/10/2011, 18-19 & 19/11/2011, 12-13) and the *Prevent* programme, the same might be said of RC and Muslim chaplaincy, at least at national level. Doe’s definition, then, serves to intensify for Anglican chaplains issues which confront other chaplains.

## **2.2 Chaplaincy and pastoral care**

Two (amongst many) questions, then, might be asked about all employed chaplains, but especially of Anglicans with their legislated status and their roots in the constitutional and political soil. The first seeks to establish a perspective on the extent to which chaplains’ ministry serves the needs of people and/or bureaucratic and institutional needs, echoing Pattison’s advice to discover who holds power and whose interests are being served (Pattison 2000, 101). The second asks about the activities which constitute that ministry. My research question all along has been, “What do Anglican prison

chaplains think they are doing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” Pastoral care figures prominently, although no respondent actually uses the term, while many express a reluctance to introduce faith or religion into their contacts with prisoners and staff. Cave (2011) points out that HMPS do not define pastoral care as embodied in lists of chaplains’ functions.

The apparent separation of theology from ministry needs at least to be located within the huge epistemology of pastoral care and theology following the work of Selby (1983) and Campbell (1985). It is worth remembering Pattison’s observation that, “Pastoral care is variegated, incoherent and fragmented, both in practice and theory.” (Pattison 2000, 206) This descriptive analysis is followed in a later article (Pattison 2008, 8) by a more transformative and inclusive view of the potential for mutuality in pastoral engagements. He asserts the centrality of a gospel-based precedent for engagements at group and individual level so that systems are interrogated as well as individuals being comforted and adapted to the system (2008, 9). His stance is an implied riposte to the public aspect of socio-political attempts to manoeuvre chaplaincy in prisons. In 5.2 & 11.2 I investigate the practicability of such an approach and the form that it might take in the light of comparable engagement in the Republic of Ireland. (Catholic Bishops of Ireland, 2008 & 2010)

As Becci observes about European chaplains (2012,112), Anglican chaplains minister from a background of implicit power, both political and ecclesial, whether or not it consciously informs their ministry. The point has been developed by both Forrester (2000, 86) and Pattison (1994, 202ff), weighing prophecy against individual pastoral ministry. Forrester (2000,79) argues the interdependence and intentionality of power and care as well as the inseparability of care for the individual and for society.

It has been asked in recent times why prison chaplains, who must have more than an inkling of the degrading and brutalising things that happen in some of Britain’s prisons, have made no public protest or complaint. If the answer to that is that in many cases prison chaplains are employees of the state and bound by the Official Secrets Act, the question must then be asked whether ministers of the gospel should

agree to serve under such conditions. But to be fair, such institutional settings do allow abundant scope for effective pastoral work while often disallowing or discouraging prophecy. (Forrester 2000, 86)

Forrester recognises an inevitability in institutional constraint and admits the possibility of “effective” individual ministry within them, as does Pattison (1994, 202). Their words uncomfortably echo Clemmer’s observations (1958, 234 -238) and Allison’s account of a chaplain’s denial of conditions at HMP Manchester before the riot of 1990:

[He] has never spoken out against either conditions or the actions of screws at Strangeways. He must have seen hundreds of inmates who have been beaten; it is part of his job to go down to D1, the block, where he will have seen men beaten black and blue. But Proctor only speaks about God and the screws and how good they both are. (Jameson & Allison 1995, 132)

Pattison constructs a list of critical questions (1994,59) about pastoral care which might be adapted for institutional chaplaincy. He argues (1994, 202) that individual care which appears to ignore oppression and injustice risks being considered socio-politically conservative and that, “the focus on individuals and small groups prominent in the work of many chaplains can also be seen as implicitly affirming the *status quo* and the power of people who already have power.” (1994, 200) Despite the erastian implications of this, Pattison, like Forrester, does not underestimate the feasibility and desirability of “care and attention to individuals.” (1994, 202) Both of them raise issues at systemic rather than local level, comparable with Russell’s assessment of later 19<sup>th</sup> century relations between clergy and their parishioners (1980, 127). Graham makes an analogous point when she argues that,

In public theology, knowledge is power..... those wishing to intervene in the public domain.....need to be aware of whose voices are heard, and those seeking to represent or make space for formerly silenced voices need to think about how that process comes about. (Graham 2009, 239)

Since ministers will espouse a responsibility for the “the cure of souls” of all within a designated area, her suggestion that “The boundaries between communities of faith and the secular world...is (*sic*) perhaps more permeable

by virtue of establishment” appears to run counter to recent developments in the Prison Service chaplaincy. Her observation is important, though, firstly because she is writing of gender inclusivity and secondly because she signals the need for reflection upon theology and praxis. This is relevant because of the almost total lack of organised or structured reflection upon practice amongst Anglican prison chaplains. This is not to say that they do not reflect individually upon their ministry – I know that they do (Green 2001, Cave 2011, Phillips 2011) – but in the past hundred years no cohering discourse has emerged. My own practitioner experience and subsequent research field notes show that area and regional meetings have tended to be dominated by responses to HMPS policy and matters of local procedure. The most recent restructuring of chaplaincy in 2012 largely removed the possibility of such meetings’ continuing while the entitlement to annual retreat effectively vanished around the turn of the century.

The value of moral reflection is set out by Lynch (2002, 10) who observes that “Another reason that pastoral workers may find it difficult to think about their work in terms of values is the desire of many....to avoid ‘moralism’ in their practice.” I discuss these issues in 4.3. He stresses the importance of distinguishing between “espoused theories” and “the implicit values, the assumptions and the intuitive reaction that shape our immediate responses in any given situation.” (2002, 21) The last four words of the extract assume greater significance when he emphasizes “the importance of taking account of the social and institutional context in which pastoral encounters occur,” (2002, 57), a necessity implied by a respondent, Roger (8.5). The value for prison chaplains of Lynch’s case for moral reflection resides in his third reflection on “the good life”, asking whether it is “promoted or hindered through the context, boundaries and quality of my pastoral relationships, as well as through the content of the pastoral conversation that I engage in.” (2002, 17)

A similar rationale also found in Selby (1983, 34) and deriving from Schön (1983) underlies Lyall’s six elements of “reflective conversation with the situation”, especially the “willingness to treat clients/parishioners as

reflective practitioners with knowledge, insights and abilities which contribute to the solution of the problem in hand.” This could offer a way in which the power imbalances might be addressed, albeit within the constraints of prison structures.

Browning argues that the task of reflection is shaped by the secular and religious practices in which practitioners are implicated – “sometimes uncomfortably” (Browning 1991, 5-6) and further argues for a feedback process of practice > theory > practice (1991, 9). The value of reflection for Browning is that while all practice is theory-laden, it is taken for granted and seen as “so natural and self-evident that we never take time to abstract the theory from the practice and look at it as something in itself.” He poses two awkward questions, in this case for the Anglican churches and, to a lesser extent, the makers and executants of prison policy. The normative question asks whether it is,

justifiable to say that the Christian communities are sanctioned by the norms and ideals of the Judaeo-Christian tradition to be carriers of practical rationality. The descriptive question asks, In what ways *are* (*sic*) these communities carriers of practical reason although they may not always exercise it well and faithfully. (1991, 9-11)

The questions are “awkward” insofar that the first implies a need for self-examination by Christian theorists and practitioners in a multi-faith context as suggested by Ford (2011, 13) alongside the claims of other faith traditions. The second ought to initiate at some level a discourse around the Anglican churches’ vision of chaplaincy in prisons, their practical support for it and their effective commitment to it. The COE, after all, has over two centuries experience of prison chaplaincy and enjoys access to government at the highest levels: Browning’s questions prompt a pertinent, further question about how far and with what effect wisdom has been accrued and disseminated with transformative effect by the COE.

Ballard (2009, 19) stresses both the need for and the immediacy of *episcopy*, maintaining a wholeness of view, but within a compartmentalised and plural society or, as Slater (2012, 314) puts it, “Chaplains are in a position to engage with those who are not church members and to address individual and social

concerns from within the particular realities of everyday life.” Ballard (2009, 23) recognises that, “This may seldom be in theological language or even in faith terms.”

I have indicated two threads amongst many in the wider discourse of pastoral care and theology, the addressing of causes and the need for reflection upon practice, both of which are largely lacking in my data because respondents did not mention them, whereas they might have been expected to do so.

Todd & Tipton show how “the myth” of neutral chaplains as “independent, counter-cultural agents” is constructed and sustained by prisoners and staff, despite chaplains’ status as prison employees and as faith representatives (Todd & Tipton, 2011,7). Todd (2013, 152-157) infers a political framework for “neutrality” composed of ensuring prisoners’ rights under European legislation, “contributing to the mission of the criminal justice system”, and assisting in delivering government measures against extremism and radicalisation. The last, although a brief for Muslim chaplains, is not necessarily always outside Anglican chaplains’ ambit if they are also the co-ordinating or managing chaplain. The components of the frame are variables within which chaplains also pursue a traditional ministry based on the statutory duties, listening to prisoners and conducting religious activities. In an unpublished paper Todd finds Foucault’s concept of heterotopia to be a plausible theoretical framework, emphasising the concept of “not prison” or “nowhere” and the possibility of heterotopias of crisis within the heterotopia of deviance. He suggests a misalignment of perspectives between chaplains’ own locating of their office within vocation and theology, and staff and prisoners’ disconnected view of any link between the pastoral and the religious. Todd, like Becci, thus offers a model of chaplaincy which necessarily embraces change whilst maintaining continuity, symbolised, perhaps, by the distance between the legal requirement that “the chaplain shall be a clergyman of the Church of England” and the fact of mixed gender, multi faith chaplaincy teams.

Todd (2013, 147) extends the concept of neutrality from the chaplain to chaplaincy spaces: chapel, mosque and world faith room. This does not mean, however, that these are not sometimes contested spaces; both Freddie and Daniel allude to manifestations of resistance from prisoners in chapel, in which both function and control are implicitly contested: Gilliat-Ray (2005, 290 & 293; 2004, 472 & 2005, 301) refers to sacred spaces as areas of contestation, not only between faith traditions, but also within faith traditions. I extend this discussion later. (4.6.4)

### **2.3 How total is “total”?**

Prison studies have been strongly influenced by Goffman’s functional typology of total institutions (TIs) “in five rough groupings”, in which “jails and penitentiaries” are listed as “a third type of total institution to protect the community against what are felt to be intentional dangers to it.” (Goffman 1968, 16-17) He characterises TIs as places where:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority.

Second, each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together.

Third, all phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials.

Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution.

This is my conceptual framework; it intertwines with Turner’s theory of *societas* and *communitas*, and some aspects of Bell’s theory of rituals. This outline is developed in Chapter 6.

Davies (1989, 77-78) has commented that “Goffman’s concept of the ‘total institution’ has a tight definition that cannot be stretched with impunity.” The concept, has, however, been expanded in a number of studies, though not by Hunt (2011) who, having chosen an atypical target group, comes close to

identifying the prison and its chaplain. Farrington (1992, 6), however, has pointed out that Goffman was primarily concerned with mental institutions and “the total isolation and separation of the institution and its inhabitants from the larger society in which the institution resides.” He asserts that this is an inaccurate model of the US prison system. Baer and Ravneberg (2008, 213) further problematized the term “total institution”; like Farrington they assert that the concept plays to populist, retributive views of prison whereas “although neo-institutional theorists have been inspired by Goffman since the 1970s, there does not exist a common understanding of the concept of total institution.” They object to the inflexible, binary nature of the TI theory (2008,213) and find Foucault’s theory of heterotopia to be more accommodating.

Moran (2011, 350) has further loosened the binary scheme implied by Goffman: “although carceral space seems to be sharply demarcated from the outside world, the prison wall is in fact more porous than might at first be assumed” by considering prison visiting areas as “liminal spaces of betweenness and indistinction.” Moran applies Turner’s theories of liminality and *communitas* to a specific area of the prison. She suggests that not only is the prison wall permeable, but “the idea that there is a clear binary distinction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ has been destabilised.” She further suggests (2013,13) that there are ‘transcarceral spaces’ of re-confinement beyond the physical walls of the prison, similar to Scott’s “decarceration” (2011, 31). Whilst the latter idea might be applied to home detention and curfews, these, although they blur the concept of incarceration, fall outside my focus.

Becci (2012) also uses Goffman’s four points “to define the role of religion for inmates and religious actors,” (2012,83) but implies a measure of permeability of TIs (2012,96) which “religious actors” help to effect. TIs restrict some modes of contact but enable others, including the religious.

While prisons are, in varying degrees of intensity, total institutions, Goffman’s four main points do not preclude a degree of “restricted contact”

(1968, 18) so that the prison wall becomes an analogue of a semi-permeable membrane. Taking Moran and Becci together I suggest that chaplains permeate the wall both physically and, in a metonymic way, as church or faith group.

Turner's theory of liminality can be applied in both macro and micro contexts. The separation from society emphasized by Goffman can be read in Turner's terms as liminality; Turner writes of the entrant into liminality that "he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state." (1969, 94) This may be taken to refer to van Gennep's three stage model (1960, 11); in this case the "coming state" may be for the prisoner the eventual release back into outside society, a world which may be all too familiar at the end of a short sentence of a year or two but which can be bewilderingly strange after several years of confinement. Maruna (2011, 8 & 11) considers the theory at length in the micro context of release and rehabilitation but does not use it (2011,13).

I suggest, like Moran, that specific physical locations in prisons fulfil specific functions and have a conceptual value as liminal spaces. Bradshaw, Emerson and Haxby (1972, 333) in their survey of prison reception procedures, concluded that their "study of admission procedures in two penal establishments in England cast doubt on the general applicability of Goffman's hypothesis to all types of total institutions." Their conclusion that, "In the minds of prisoners, and in the context of the deprivations of prison life, the experience of reception is not remembered as a particularly taxing ordeal," is apt to confuse the outward manifestation with the inward form. Crewe provides a corrective: "Even when these processes are not intentionally degrading, they still have the effect of communicating to prisoners that they are submitting their normal status as free citizens." (Crewe 2009, 83) Crewe recognises that while the tone or mode of delivery may be more responsive to the humanness of the subject, the process is still the process and its purpose is understood by the subject to the extent that "receptions" is used to refer to people, process and place. Likewise

“chaplaincy” refers to a set of practices, the people who enact them and the place from which they operate.

The liminality principle can be observed within prisons where there is a healthcare centre and/or a segregation unit. These areas are routinely off limits to prisoners and are not visited by staff other than those specifically allocated. For chaplains, however, daily visits are mandatory so that they are some of the few staff who can and do penetrate these two liminoids (in the sense that they are different paths through the prison) or, in Foucauldian terms, the heterotopia of crisis.

Scott has proposed a development of the TI concept which she labels the Reinventive Institution (2010, 218 & 2011, 2). The term is useful insofar that it recognises moves towards a more medicalised approach to criminality. Scott’s examples are drawn from the USA (95-96) but she could have instanced in England the Sex Offender Treatment Programme or the Enhanced Thinking Skills programme as examples of CBT based attempts to modify behaviour. It is the principle of “voluntary” programme take-up which matters to the data in subsequent chapters (4.5.4); a number of respondents are involved in the delivery of prison based programmes founded on the restorative practice of developing victim awareness. The measurement of outcomes accords with the criteria for other accredited courses and locates this aspect of chaplaincy in the mainstream of prison aims and practice. More subtly, Scott suggests, it embeds the prisoner in the institutional ethos at a deeper level. (2010, 226-227)

I return to this subject in 4.5.4.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY AND NARRATIVE**

3.1	Methodology: theory and practice	44
3.1.1	Why this qualitative approach? Researcher factors.	44
3.1.2	Why this qualitative approach? Institutional factors.	45
3.1.3	The question of voice and narrator identity.	47
3.1.4	Interview based data.	47
3.1.5	Purposive sampling	51
3.1.6	Approaching potential respondents	52
3.1.7	Choice of interview location	53
3.1.8	Identity, anonymity and pseudonyms	58
3.1.9	Distancing and defamiliarisation	59
3.1.10	Access to the prisons estate	60
3.1.11	Access to individual establishments	62
3.1.12	Transcription	63
3.1.13	Coding and data analysis	65
3.2	Prison parables: chaplains as story tellers	65

This chapter is in two sections. Firstly, I set out the reasons, both personal and institutional, for choosing semi-structured interviews as the data gathering method, setting these in the broader ethnographic discourse. I examine my dual identity as practitioner and researcher, indicating how I attempted to avoid over familiarisation. Next I outline how I sought and gained ethical and institutional approval for the research, identifying two levels of gatekeeping, two perimeters to be negotiated. I describe how interview sites were chosen since these seemed to be an operative

component in the narrative. Lastly in the first section, I describe how data were transcribed and analysed.

The second section refers to narrative structures which I found helpful as templates for analysing responses. These were often, though not exclusively, couched in narrative form, making fable-like units. Some were so polished that they may have been “rehearsed” through repetition. Whilst these narratives are not necessarily “accurate” or objective, they are valuable insofar as they are performative both within the developing discourse of chaplaincy and the broader discourse around prisons.

### **3.1 Methodology: theory and practice**

Wacquant (2002) has alleged a decline in prison ethnography yet there has been significant recent activity resulting in papers and extended studies by Liebling (2001), Crawley (2004), Wahidin (2004), and Crewe (2009). In addition to these Maruna (2006 & 2010) has conducted ethnographical research into pastoral aspects of imprisonment while Gilliat-Ray (2011) writes about embodiment issues in research processes. All these studies were able to draw on at least a measure of support from the authors’ institutions. My own research is self-funded and is therefore more closely circumscribed in terms of finance and support services.

#### **3.1.1 Why this qualitative approach? Researcher factors.**

I was a full time Anglican prison chaplain for eight years until statutory retirement, by which time I had ministered in every category (cat) of male prison establishment including two local prisons, one category A and the other cat B. For four years I was chaplain in a category C prison housing only sex offenders, though linked with a small category D open establishment close by. For the last few months of my full time service I was chaplain in another category C, housing only lifers, all of them convicted of murder and many years into their sentences with diminishing hope of release on licence. After retirement I worked sessionally in another local prison and in a women’s prison.

There are approximately 130 prisons in England and Wales, almost all with a designated Anglican chaplain, not necessarily – though almost always - a priest and not necessarily full time. I am therefore a practitioner researcher working within a small group, many of whom I know and by whom I am known professionally. I return to the issue of practitioner and peer researching in 3.1.2 & 3.1.7 where I shall argue that professional familiarity and group membership do not necessarily confer insider status or recognition.

Further, my wife was a full time Anglican chaplain in a women's prison having also held regional responsibility, and is similarly known to many other chaplains. She accompanied me to six interviews and, although she did not take part, she became part of the dynamic insofar that respondents could and did direct their words to her as well as or instead of to me. This seemed positive because their attention could be redirected away from the questioner/prompter and the recording devices. The interview records do not show any apparent deviation from topic into familiarity but it seemed that her presence helped to establish an unthreatening context, possibly a domestic analogue in a decidedly undomestic setting, for serious reflection with both male and female respondents. Indeed, one male respondent spoke almost exclusively to her rather than to me. Her involvement was not mentioned in the documentation submitted to SSEC and the NOMS research ethics committee but began when I visited two female chaplains whom my wife knew well; they assumed that she would be part of the process and welcomed her presence. When I ran two parallel focus groups she facilitated one of them. As one of the respondents, she was interviewed by my supervisor, Dr Andrew Todd, using initial prompts supplied by me on the understanding that dialogue should be allowed to unfold. Dr Todd also conducted a focus group.

### **3.1.2 Why this qualitative approach? Institutional factors.**

The choice of method was determined as much by institutional features as by researcher characteristics. Goffman proposed prisons as his third type of

total institution (Goffman 1961,16) whilst Foucault (1986, 25) saw them as a heterotopia of deviance, mirror images of society but separate from it. It is possible to question the absolute totality of the prison *qua* institution since the introduction of probation service staff, NHS GP provision, mental health in-reach teams, prison visitors and other agencies, all of whom are granted access to prisons for specific purposes. Such ingress, however, is limited both by function and institutional discretion. Chaplains contribute to this inward flow by bringing in visitors for services, religious classes and pastoral support.

Foucault (1986,26) acknowledges the fact of such entry but seems to suggest that it is easy to mistake it for actual access. He stresses the “rites and purifications of entry” where entry is theoretically possible but also the illusory aspect of admission:

Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures.....Everyone can enter these heterotopic sites, but, in fact, that is only an illusion: we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded. (1986,26)

The relevance here is that as a chaplain with security clearance I might be thought of as an insider, at least in relation to the prison system in general, but as a researcher visiting specific prisons I become an outsider who, at local discretion, is cleared for temporary entry to perform a specific task under specific circumstances.

So much and no more; my situation as both practitioner and researcher reflects the innate antithesis of Foucault’s fifth principle of heterotopias. Informal (i.e. unrecorded) comment and some email feedback (3.1.4) suggested that one reason why chaplains were willing to talk to me was that I was a practitioner. There are, however, dangers and threats, not only for practitioner/researchers, but especially for them:

The academic study of prisons is enmeshed in this contradiction: On the one hand, the appearance of “objectivity” contributes to an abstraction that protects these sites from view, while, on the other, intense engagement runs the danger of a comprehensive intimacy with the terms provided by the prison itself. (Rhodes 2001, 68)

### **3.1.3 The question of voice and narrator identity.**

My voice or that of the invisible narrator/mediator? Originally I had intended to be formal. That was until I came across Wolcott’s reminder, “One of the opportunities – and challenges – posed by qualitative accounts is to treat fellow humans as people rather than objects of study, to regard ourselves as humans who conduct research among others rather than on them.” (Wolcott 2009, 17) This seemed to fit my own situation as researcher and reminded me that the stories, experiences and reflections with their hesitations, inconsistencies and fractured syntax, which I heard and recorded were linked to and reflected my own. I therefore decided to use the first person narrative voice throughout the study, except in the early chapters dealing with historical research. I return to questions of identity in 3.1.8.

### **3.1.4 Interview based data.**

A number of reservations attend reliance upon interviews and the role of the practitioner/researcher. Hammersley maintains that, “Since only the practitioner has access to the commitments and practical theories which inform praxis, only the practitioner can study praxis.” Objections about self perception of praxis are, says Hammersley, illusory since they imply that “there is some medium in which praxis can be described and analysed in ways which are entirely unrelated to the values and interests of those doing the observing.” (1993, 182-183) Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 108-109) suggest that in the apparently spontaneous, semi-structured interviews such as I conducted “the dividing line between participant observation and interviewing is hard to discern.” Over the course of thirty two interviews the mixture and order changed from sit-down interviews with virtually no lead-in to participant involvement in situations. Although the latter configuration was rare, I nevertheless found myself visiting (but not interviewing) prisoners in-cell and, in one case, helping to conduct a self-harm review with

a prisoner where a senior officer was unsure of procedure and practice; as a full time chaplain I had been a staff trainer in self-harm awareness. On another occasion I was present and involved when a prison officer was attacked.

I tried to arrange a walk around each prison before the interview took place so that I could get at least a feel for each chaplain's approach to prisoners and staff and theirs to the chaplain (see also 3.1.7). It was also intended to give me a snapshot of the context in which each chaplain's ministry was conducted. I do not pretend that this provides "access to some cognitive and attitudinal base from which a person's behaviour in 'natural' settings is derived in an unmediated way," (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 108-109) but it may be valid as what Glaser and Strauss term "a slice of data" on the basis that, "different kinds of data give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties". (Denzin 1970, 108) The importance of contextualising interviews in terms of research aims and circumstances has been emphasised, with the proviso that a different research strategy might produce a different set of data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 103). As with the interviews themselves, so with the walkabouts; the data gathered were those gathered in that place and at that time by this researcher, a necessary but not disqualifying circumscription identified by Silverman: "observation is held to be only appropriate at a preliminary or 'exploratory' stage of research." (Silverman 2005, 111) The question recurs in the discussion below about choice of location. For a variety of reasons it was not always possible for the walkabout to precede the interview and in two cases there was no walkabout at all. But when it did take place a point of interest was the chaplain's selection of areas to visit and any associated reflections or memories. The chaplain may have something in common with Hall's outreach worker in following an habitual path and seeking specific individuals (Hall 2009, 578-579). In a few cases I simply joined the chaplain in the normal course of their duties; this was always the most useful form of walkabout since it seemed to get closest to the chaplain's normal routine, given that it was not 'normal' to

have a visitor in tow whose presence and identity begged explanation. In two cases the walk did not happen; in one instance the establishment was under inspection and the Governor was said to be wary of a researcher's presence. In the other instance it seemed that the chaplain himself, having agreed to the interview, regarded my presence as a nuisance and I saw only the areas between the gate and the chapel.

It is important to establish a status for my data and to be clear about their reliability and, therefore, their validity. In an intersubjective dialogue situation where knowledge and status appear to be shared and where there is a history of prior acquaintance, the origins of the data have to be interrogated to acknowledge the element of co-construction. Walford, questioning the validity of interview data, assumes this phenomenon,

We know that interviewers and interviewees co-construct the interview, and that the replies to questions are produced for that particular occasion and circumstance..... They will always have subjective perceptions that will be related to their own past experiences and current conditions. (2007, 147)

It is precisely the revelations of "subjective perceptions of events and opinions" which I have been searching out, acknowledging that they "will change over time, and according to circumstance" and that "they may be at some considerable distance from 'reality' as others might see it." (2007, 147) This may, indeed, reflect the standing of at least some chaplains in relation to the institutions which they serve, both prison and church.

The prompts and the steers which characterise the semi-structured format arose from my original interview agenda despite my declared intention that respondents should, as far as possible, determine the course of the interview. Strategic intervention became necessary when digression set in. Freeman et al (2007, 25) implicitly disagree with Walford and energetically dispute the necessity to establish standards of evidence; they recognise that all qualitative data are potentially corrupted:

Data are produced from social interactions and are therefore constructions or interpretations. There are no 'pure', 'raw' data, uncontaminated by human thought and action, and the significance of

data depends on how material fits into the architecture of corroborating data...Neither research participants nor researchers can be neutral, because, as emphasised earlier, they are always positioned culturally, historically and theoretically. (2007,27)

It is more appropriate, then, to speak of contextualisation than implied subversion or corruption of data. The context here is of a self-contained and self-defining group of professionals, frequently known to each other and working in an almost totally closed situation to which outsiders can be temporarily admitted on locally defined terms and conditions. Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that, while people's own self reports must be scrutinised, "there is no reason to dismiss them as of no value at all, or even to treat them as of value only as displays of perspectives or discourse strategies." (2007,109). Silverman (2005, 157), shows a case for trusting respondents' accounts, based on the establishment of rapport and "understanding the interviewees' experiences and guaranteed confidentiality." Within these parameters, the semi-structured interview can also be regarded as performative in itself. Two sets of questions and prompts are included as Appendix 3; the resultant transcripts are in Appendix 4. Together these exemplify the extent to which to which both participants constructed the sessions.

My own known-about experience and practitioner's desire to listen to other practitioners' accounts may have initiated rapport from which dialogue could develop; a few respondents commented in feedback emails on the opportunity to reflect upon their practice. Becky, a pseudonym, made six points similar to Clarke's findings (Clarke 2010, 414); they were made variously and separately by other respondents. (I discuss the use of pseudonyms in 3.1.8):

- "Why did I take part in your research? I thought I'd answer before being influenced by reading what others thought.
- Having done some research myself I know that it can be an invaluable process both to the researcher and also to the participant.
- There aren't a great many opportunities to think about what we do, and I am strongly in favour of being a reflective practitioner, so I thought this might enable me to be one.

- I also think the role of a prison chaplain is prophetic, and how can you be prophetic unless you talk about what you do?
- I think research contributes to greater understanding - if it is done well, with integrity and honesty, and I wanted to support that process.
- In this era of secularism, and budget cuts, the position of chaplains in any institution can be marginalized and may be threatened by finance, so to remind others of the value added contribution which we can make is timely.
- Being a chaplain, particularly as coordinator, can at times be quite lonely; I valued the opportunity to talk about what I do with a knowledgeable and sympathetic listener."

### **3.1.5 Purposive sampling**

The sample has been compiled in an attempt to reflect different apparent categories of chaplain respondent. The size of the total cohort of designated Anglican chaplains is approximately 130. (Absolute precision is not possible because of vacancies, possible suspensions from duty and uncertainty about what constitutes a prison entity; some prisons are administratively combined but operationally separate, each with their own substantive Anglican chaplain.) My sample size is 32, or about 22% of the cohort. Within this I have tried to represent as far as possible categories of gender (related to establishment gender designation), age, length of service, type of establishment, self-assessed theological and ecclesiological positions. A projected outcome of this purposive sample is the extent to which, if at all, there is significant variation related to the categories or whether any variations suggest new and different categories (9.9; 9.10 & 11)(Glaser & Strauss in Denzin 1970, 109). I indicate below that I use other slices of data, specifically the tourist's eye view of a walk around the prison. This is unlikely to produce detailed or extensive data but its admissibility as data-gathering has to be set against the practical difficulties of observing and recording chaplains at work in prisons. I trialled this idea with three chaplains; none was enthusiastic.

Whilst I have tried to construct a sample which broadly reflects the features of the total cohort, I have slightly over-represented chaplains who are women. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there is so far no

literature which explores the perspectives of female Anglican prison chaplains. Secondly, in the process of negotiating visits, I initially thought that I detected a slight hesitancy about self-location on the part of women who were working in male prisons in comparison with their male counterparts. Another aspect of purposive sampling emerged when it started to become clear that most of my respondents identified themselves as liberal catholics. I therefore had to go in search of self-defined conservative evangelicals to achieve a spectrum of ecclesiology.

### **3.1.6 Approaching potential respondents**

My earliest contact with potential respondents was with people whom I thought likely to agree on the grounds of personal acquaintance. This occurred at meetings, by phone or at the 2009 Prison Service national conference where I had spoken. The initial, directly research-related contact with all potential respondents was by telephone so that initial queries could be responded to, whereas emails can be easily deferred. The first to be contacted were chaplains in the two NOMS regions (then designated as Prison Service areas) with which I had been most involved as a chaplain because these were the people whom I knew best; they were therefore most likely to respond positively. In the event, two chaplains declined to take part, one for personal reasons, the other for allegedly institutional reasons, citing an interdict from the Governor; the same chaplain, however, was willing to speak in his official capacity at outside events. When chaplains had indicated their willingness to participate I sent them the project documentation as it appears in Appendix 1. The informed consent forms were either returned to me by post or collected when I visited the prison. In two establishments (a YOI and a category A prison) the Security governor asked for my NOMS letter of permission. At this initial stage I made it clear that I needed to bring in two digital voice recorders. In three cases permission was refused, the category A prison, a privately operated local prison and a category C establishment which was currently being inspected, where I was refused entry as a researcher. In two of these cases I was able to record interviews outside the wall.

### 3.1.7 Choice of interview location

I decided that, as far as possible, all interviews with chaplains would take place in their prison establishment and preferably within the Chaplaincy. Potential restraints upon this I foresaw as an unwillingness to allow a voice recorder into the prison (about which I was largely and pleasantly wrong), the lack of uninterrupted time and space and an individual chaplain's preference for a different location. Elwood & Martin (2000, 649-650) concluded that the reasons for preferring an alternative location could be of interest in themselves and could, if treated with tact, enrich the interview. I would go further, however, and suggest that the choice of one option necessarily implies rejection of others, so that a preference for location B might reflect a desire to avoid location A. The micro-geographies of chosen and rejected spaces would be likely to enrich the narrative further.

Elwood & Martin (2000, 652-653) also indicate a socio-spatial dimension in which respondents may respond differently in different locations i.e. according to their customary relationships in a given space. This is a risk I take but there is no practicable alternative to accepting the responses as they are in the places where they were made. This is not to confer inviolability upon them (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 120). There are checks in that a small number of respondents are revisited and selected data were put anonymously to focus groups for comment and reflection. The other check is that I asked each respondent to walk me around their establishment for an hour or so, preferably before the interview (3.1.4). This is not intended to be a mini-ethnography though I think it can be reasonably considered as "a slice of data". Its purpose is twofold. Firstly, it gives me a sense of the scale of the establishment and enables me to orient myself within it. Secondly, it enables me to see the chaplain interacting with staff and prisoners. None of this is recorded on audio though in some cases I have referred to encounters in interviews. As part of my field notes I noted where the chaplains chose to take me, based on their own knowledge and experience of the prison.

This dimension is deeper than it appears. Prisons are places of multiple time scales and movement. The parameters of time-scale variation might be set by the indeterminacy of a life sentence (Roth 1963, 99) on the one hand, through the temporal regularity of the daily prison routine, to a governor's immediate deadline for providing information for a parliamentary question on the other. The chaplain's perambulation will thus intersect with several different time scales as described by Zerubavel (1981) and Wahidin (2002 & 2006) and their related expectations and effects. More than this, though, each part of the prison is the repository of its own micro-geography. In older local prisons this may be a still sharp awareness of the location of the execution chamber (sometimes colloquially known as "the topping shed"); in any prison it might be the site of a recent death in custody. More predictably, the micro-history may centre upon the exclusive employment of Rule 45 prisoners (usually sex offenders or drug debt defaulters) in a particular work area. Most parts of most prisons are susceptible to the possibility of unforeseen anguish or violence, sometimes involving staff in calming strategies or forceful intervention (C&R). These can affect the chaplain's day in one way or another, according to their mode of operation. Hall found that such walking is "a discursive rather than a purposive practice". He concludes:

And yet the truth in this ought not to obscure the continuing fact that most of our movements do not take us very far or very fast. To move, I have argued, is not always to move on, or away, from the place in which one already resides. (2009, 578)

In response to my request, therefore, the chaplain was following a path – possibly well worn – not only through one dimensional space but across varied timescales and histories which were themselves being lived out in a group of spaces, each with their own individual micro-geography within the larger historical and geographical narrative of the whole institution. What I was witnessing was the chaplain's successive entries into these contiguous and occasionally clashing trajectories. It was initially surprising to me that I was not given more anecdote of this kind. In prisons where I was taken to the segregation unit I was sometimes told stories about previous occupants of those cells, often along the lines of, "We had a lad down here who...." so

that the place prompted the memory of people rather than events. On reflection, I have found this unsurprising since the segregation unit is an extreme environment even in a prison and caters for relatively few prisoners, whereas residential and workshop settings are more populous and impersonal. The segregation unit in one prison had been notorious in one part of the country for a particular, repressive practice. When I mentioned this (perhaps unwisely) to the wing staff, the response was defensive and self-justifying and I noticed that the chaplain seemed to support their case, reminiscent of allegations by Jameson & Allison (1995, 132).

The tour of the establishment usually ended in the chaplaincy area, in the chaplain's office or another nearby room. This was my preferred location but respondents were free to suggest alternatives. One female chaplain indicated early in our initial discussions a strong preference for a location outside the prison although she subsequently changed her mind under the pressure of time and other commitments. Another female chaplain suggested talking over lunch at a nearby restaurant which we did, though the conversation was not recorded; we later spoke in her office at her suggestion. Both women work in male establishments but it is difficult to say whether or how far a preference for speaking off-site or out of office is a gendered preference. In the event, both indicated a willingness to be interviewed in their office after I had suggested that they might choose another location. Two other female chaplains were content to be interviewed on site; both work in women's prisons. Yet another female chaplain decided to use the office of another department; this was almost obsessively tidy and organised in comparison with the chaplain's own office which was more 'lived in' though by no means untidy.

The chaplain's room or office did not always provide significant supplementary data though none seemed to have been influenced by the Prison Service's 'clear desk' policy. Nevertheless, it was tempting to try to adduce helpful data. A chaplain who seemed in interview to be more tense than some inhabited an office of orange-painted breeze blocks with no

windows, only a small leaky skylight. An uneaten sandwich was on the desk at 4.00pm and the interview took place in the chapel.

In another prison, the interview took place in a large store cupboard since the chaplaincy office was too small and noisy with three staff, the imam, the Catholic chaplain and someone from another department, attempting to use two computers and talking at the same time; only the imam spoke to me. Perhaps it was not surprising that we ate our sandwiches in the chapel and that another chaplain took a mid-day nap there.

Only a minority of chaplains had their own exclusive office though there are practical reasons why a co-ordinating chaplain should have a separate, quieter work space with a dedicated computer. In one prison, the chaplaincy office was large enough to accommodate six full size desks without discomfort: all faced inwards into the centre of the room, facilitating a brief daily meeting without fuss or formality. The co-ordinating chaplain, not the Anglican (who was long serving and with a national responsibility), had a large display of Liverpool FC posters and articles in his area; there was no other similar personal decoration in the rest of the office. It was as if he wished to assert his presence in a non-aggressive fashion.

There were two reasons for my initial choice of preferred location. The first was consistency of location in a generic sense; each dialogue would have taken place within the respondent's workplace. Within broad generic parameters all prisons and all chaplaincies are different; the common factor would be the setting of chaplains within their working context. Like Elwood and Martin, Herzog (2005, 25) argues that the location should be seen as part of the interpretation of the findings and that it plays a role in constructing reality. I would prefer to say that it could play a role in reconfiguring and recontextualising experience or in constructing a new "reality" which, admittedly, might exist only in discourse. The discourse therefore becomes part of the process under discussion. Herzog maintains that the very fact of the interview, taken with all its attendant circumstances, influences subsequent analysis and "the construction of the reality being studied."

(Herzog 2005, 26) Devault (1990, 100) recognises the process by which the researcher's active involvement with respondents leads to their co-construction of a "topic" and "fuller answers to questions that cannot be asked in simple, straightforward ways." Glaser & Strauss also recognise the propensity of respondents to vary their responses according to situation and to interviewer (Denzin 1970,110).

The second reason for the choice of location was my own status as participant and practitioner observer. While this needs to be defined in terms of its limitations it nevertheless makes entry into the prisons less of a boundary-crossing activity. Some, though not all, of the need for initial familiarization is removed. It might mean that I can see and hear chaplains interacting with the symbols and processes of their working environment: the danger is that familiarity might blind me to the strength and significance of these symbols and processes or cause me to overlook them completely. The advantages for me as interviewer, then, are access and vocabulary; the disadvantage is familiarity with the generic environment.

I shall examine the ethical and personal dilemmas of bounded group peer interviewing in relation to narrative analysis in the Prison Parables section (3.2 & Appendix 10). The issues are signalled by Platt as primarily, though not exclusively, relational problems arising from shared group membership and the perceived history and characteristics brought to the research situation by the researcher (Platt 1981, 77). She identifies the way in which apparently shared assumptions can problematize the gathering of detailed data (1981,82) and the risk of digression (1981, 81). She states the generic problem succinctly:

Shared community membership is enormously helpful in some ways, but it implies personal relations which carry social obligations that can make the normal impersonal and instrumental use of the interview difficult. This can affect both respondent and interviewer. (1981,78)

Whilst not invalidating data so gathered, it is nevertheless a salutary reminder of the need to contextualise in detail the data, their gathering and subsequent processing.

### **3.1.8 Identity, anonymity and pseudonyms**

It is in the nature of all chaplains' pastoral ministry to meet their 'clients' on a one to one basis, generally using first names. Similarly, my interviews were conducted individually using first names. It seemed right to sustain at least an illusion of that sense of person in a way that could not be achieved by referring to them as numbers or as Chaplain A or B. I therefore decided to use pseudonyms, using names which were plausible but, at the same time, avoiding the first names of any current Anglican chaplains. The names were chosen at random and bear no resemblance to the real name; one or two of the pseudonyms suggest celtic origins but this is not an indicator of the chaplain's own origins. Occasionally I have used either the passive voice or a circuitous construction to avoid betraying the gender of a chaplain who has said sensitive or personal things in the confidentiality of the interview and generalised extreme situations which they related to me. Total anonymity was part of the basis for the interviews. One narrative has been withheld on request.

The naming of real prisons seems to be arbitrary and, quite often, surprisingly redolent of country houses and rural vistas. My pseudonyms preserve that arbitrariness. Delamont (2002, 203-209) has addressed the question of pseudonyms and, in particular, the problem of dealing with Welsh institutions. There are only four prisons in Wales and to assign them fictitious Welsh names would, even if only marginally, increase the chances of identification; I have therefore assigned them 'English' names. Some prisons would be easily identifiable even from limited detail so I have had to withhold some interesting and picturesque data.

The only identifiable persona in these pages is me; so who am I as researcher? I needed to strike a balance between researcher and practitioner. I therefore planned my own self-presentation in relation to the respondents as I knew them or anticipated them. For those whom I hardly knew, if at all, I wore a clerical shirt to signal the authenticity of my own direct knowledge of chaplaincy. Interviewing respondents whom I already

knew as colleagues I was less likely to wear the clerical shirt since my authenticity was presumably not in doubt and I wished to signal a subtle but significant role shift from practitioner/colleague to researcher/listener. Gender issues did not seem to influence the interview situation at the time (but see 7.1). Otherwise, I tried to prompt and respond as an informed observer and audience though the dynamic varied according to depth of acquaintance. This proved most difficult with chaplains who had been daily colleagues.

### **3.1.9 Distancing and defamiliarisation**

Clifford has remarked that, “Insiders studying their own culture offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways.” (Clifford 1986, 9) This does not necessarily confer unique validity so, attempting to relativize the prison milieu, I have visited other public institutions where interaction is founded upon defined procedures and the possession of knowledge to which access is sought. I have thus observed and interviewed a member of staff in a city centre public library and a manager and co-ordinating chaplain in a large regional hospital. These two institutions were chosen because each implies a “known” purpose based upon a body of data and expertise and in which institutional employees interact with visitors or clients to impart and apply the data. In each case I was in the situation of being non-expert apart from having been the user of such services. The library experience alerted me to issues of the embodiment of the researcher; in practical, processual terms, where did I stand when Morag was interacting with library users? How much and how visibly could I record my observations? How could a balanced relationship be achieved between researcher and respondent? These questions were not necessarily answered by this pre-research but they gave me an experiential framework for approaching my main fieldwork. The hospital visit alerted me to an awareness of location; although the knowledge/power balance between staff and patients tips heavily towards the staff, there was nevertheless a sense of ease in which patients appeared to interact with staff on an even level, in contrast to prisons. Later, I was able as an in-patient in another large

regional hospital to observe interactions between staff, and between staff and patients, choosing occupational dress as my reference point.

Delamont (2002, 54-55) has drawn attention to studying a setting different from one's actual target as a means of defamiliarisation, and to the possibility of focussing on a taken for granted aspect; in my fieldwork I tried to make gender one of my foci, asking questions both about working with women prisoners and being a woman chaplain. Both are normal features of the prisons estate but have been studied very little, the chaplains not at all.

Ireland (2007, 221) has observed that a national prison system was instituted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to form a network of establishments which had more in common with each other than with local communities. This does not, however, mean that familiarity with one place or group of places necessarily implies familiarity across the system. As a practitioner I have found that the most effective defamiliariser is the lack of keys when visiting other prisons; I then become wholly dependent upon key holders. This was clear when I needed to use the lavatory. Some chaplaincies have their own staff toilet facilities; others have to share them with other departments. In one prison it was necessary for the key carrier either to lock me in and return after a decent period or stand guard outside. My relationship with prisoners (and to a lesser extent with staff) is redefined by not being a local chaplain and the invested authority associated with it. Furthermore, the procedures, assumptions and culture of a prison can be thought (*pace* Ireland) to be determined by local demographic factors and by the function and category of the prison. This seems to be apparent in the demeanour of gate staff towards visitors; I summarise my experiences in 3.1.11.

### **3.1.10 Gatekeeping: access to the prisons estate**

Before applying for ethical approval and permission to conduct research in prisons I had ascertained informally that sufficient chaplains would be willing to respond. The first step was to gain approval for the research project from the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. I submitted a research plan to the Committee accompanied by

An Invitation to Participate, Information for Potential Participants and a Consent form (Appendix 1). These were accepted on condition that participants' right to withdraw was clear and that compliance with professional requirements was also clear – in this case the Prison Service Code of Conduct and the requirement on me to disclose data which might threaten life or property as defined in Prison Service Order 8460.

The process of gaining permission to enter prisons for research purposes is, in theory at least, formal and is comparable with entry to foreign countries who require a visa. The comparability lies in the two stage nature of the process, the gaining of permission and the entry process itself, and in the fact that possession of a visa does not guarantee entry. My next step, therefore, was to seek the official approval of HM Prison Service (HMPS) through the Research Committee of NOMS, reflecting Hammersley and Atkinson's assertions about initial access negotiations (2007, 49). That this was granted within weeks rather than months, I was told informally, was because HMPS Chaplaincy headquarters had already indicated their approval of the project and because I would not be interviewing prisoners. I can only speculate that my proposed lines of enquiry were not perceived as inimical to the practices and reputation of prisons and chaplains (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 51). At the same time NOMS were in the process of commissioning research into attitudes to chaplaincy. The commission was awarded to St Michael's College and Cardiff University but differs from my project in that it covers the whole faith spectrum, gathers data from chaplains, staff and prisoners, and focusses on six prescribed prisons. In fact, I had almost no contact with the process of the commissioned research.

The terms of approval for my project are clear that access to individual establishments is at the Governor's discretion. At this stage the process may rely more on local values and knowledge so I did not approach governors myself; rather, I approached the chaplains to get permission to take part and, thereby, permission for me to enter their prison with recording equipment. The element of informality at this stage rests upon the chaplain's knowing who to approach for a quick (and positive!) response. Whatever the

occasional exercises in gatekeeping, I have been free to construct my own theoretical sample and to approach chaplains of my own choosing; NOMS approval does not imply any right of control or editorial ownership. Taken together, these processes can be seen as a preliminary form of gatekeeping but gatekeeping is both a physical as well as a metaphorical reality in prisons and therefore needs its own section.

### **3.1.11 Gatekeeping: access to individual establishments**

Those who staff prison gates are gate keepers in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense and have to operate cumbersome systems with thoroughness and circumspection. It is possible for a visitor to feel in some places that the gate keepers are there to keep them out but at other places are there to effect orderly and authorised entry with courtesy. In HMP Wild Wood, a category A maximum security prison, consent having been courteously sought, my wallet, jacket and person were searched tactfully but thoroughly while I stood in my socks making apparently light conversation.

In contrast, at HMP Grimley, having driven over 200 miles, I was almost barred completely by gate staff operating behind a toughened glass screen, as most do, because I did not have a £1 coin for a locker, and the paperwork allowing my voice recorders could not be found following a cursory search. I noted later that the chaplain was comparably treated. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007,43) cite Goffman's term "civil inattention" to describe the distancing of a visitor by staff. The two gate staff, both older uniformed auxiliaries (former prison officers?) at first ignored my presence outside the exterior door and, having admitted me, continued their conversation with an acquaintance at the window with much colourful language. I was greeted with an interrogative raising of an eyebrow. When it emerged that they did not have a copy of the letter of authorisation to import voice recorders, of which I had a copy, I was refused entry unless I placed the machines in a £1 coin slot locker. Having only a £2 coin I was told that no change was available so I could not enter the prison. I eventually managed to establish more helpful contact by noticing that one of the staff was doing the *Guardian*

quick crossword; I asked if I could look at the Steve Bell cartoon beneath it. The inattention diminished but the co-operation did not noticeably increase beyond one of them reluctantly going to look for change for my £2 coin; I had explained that I would formally report this obstacle to conducting approved research. This appeared to me to be an exercise of power by those who had the effective authority to refuse admission to their territory. Helpfulness and courtesy were much more common than indifference and obstruction.

The notices and furnishing of the gate area may be an indication of a prevailing local culture within which chaplains minister. The gatelodge walls of one local prison were covered with POA notices and posters which seemed to me like territorial marking. This was unusual and it is more common to see a list of names of the Senior Management Team (of which, in most places I visited, the chaplain was not a member), usually with portrait photos. Some prisons use first and last names; most use the designation Miss or Mr plus surname. I was amused to see at HMP Grimley that the chaplain was still listed as someone whom I had already interviewed following his move to another prison a year or so before. The same waiting area contained a large disused, dust covered baggage X-ray machine and featured an electronic notice screen advertising an event which had taken place a week earlier. In other prisons, however, there are chairs in carpeted waiting areas, even, in two prisons, book exchange trolleys and aquaria. In all gate areas there are notices warning about the importation of forbidden articles.

### **3.1.12 Transcription**

Both Roberts (1997, 167-168) and Hammersley (2012, 440-441) comment on the multiple possibilities of transcribing interviews. Roberts remarks on the change from the transience of speech to the fixedness of print as a social act akin to talk itself, indicating the power of the transcriber to influence the data: "Transcribers bring their own language ideology to the task." (1997, 167-168) She implies a tension between "demonstrating the constructed nature of written talk" and producing "transcriptions that are accurate and readable." The political implications of this are expressed by Green, Franquiz

and Dixon (1997, 172) who argue that transcripts re-present events and produce data “constructed by a researcher for a particular purpose, not just talk written down.”

Hammersley (2012, 439) echoes this; “there cannot be a single correct transcription..... Neither transcript nor electronic recordings should be treated as data that are simply given, in an unmediated fashion.” He identifies a number of transcribing decisions (2012, 440-442) which affect this thesis. Having decided to transcribe all of each interview I further decided to use traditional orthography in extracts, presenting only the words spoken by respondent and researcher but preserving some hesitation and broken syntax. Explanations have been interpolated in square brackets, laughter and tears in round brackets. Longer extracts are set out continuously with researcher contributions in bold type.

With four exceptions (Esther, Roger, Charlie and Juliet) the dialogues were transcribed by a confidential transcriber working within the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. My repeated interaction with the transcripts came through the need to correct errors and to estimate what might have been said at points of inaudibility and indistinctness. The interaction deepened when I prepared versions to use as out-take sources while preserving the original transcripts for possible alternative analysis. I have used traditional conventions of syntax and punctuation to try to convey on paper what I heard in interview. Non-verbal fillers have been retained where they seem significant, for example when a respondent seemed hesitant or uncertain. I have occasionally retained the ubiquitous “you know” both as a filler and as a nod to my own practitioner knowledge as assumed by the respondent.

All respondents were offered an email copy of their transcript; only five took up the offer. Others seemed glad just to have had the opportunity to reflect, talk and be listened to.

### **3.1.13 Coding and data analysis**

My intention was to analyse using the *NVivo* programme; after ten interviews this “crashed” irretrievably. Subsequent analysis was done by repeated readings and second and third level coding. Each transcript was fully coded (Charmaz 2006, 70). I began with a notional code set but soon abandoned much of this as I read, re-read and annotated transcripts and tried to respond to non-verbal signs on the audio recordings. This produced a taxonomy of around forty codes, some of them with extensive subsets. A number were abandoned because they were my own projections which did not materialize in dialogue. Time, for example, had initially seemed to me to be a central conceptual issue after reading Zerubavel and Roth; chaplains did not respond to prompts in this direction and did not voluntarily reflect upon time as an issue in their work. Other codes were grouped or combined so that, for example, ritual, liturgy and restorative practice are now seen as categories occupying the same conceptual space. The chapter headings represent the aggregation of codes.

### **3.2 Prison parables: chaplains as story tellers**

I did not set out to collect stories and have not intentionally sought them; nevertheless they kept on coming. Initially I underestimated their importance to the teller and their significance as integral parts of a total narrative, both individual and institutional. From the beginning I had coded ‘story telling’ and ‘story keeping’ as components of pastoral ministry since chaplains could be seen as transmitters of stories from the Judaeo-Christian scriptures and since Christ himself made extensive use of moral fable. Further, I was able to aggregate my own and others’ experience of prisoners telling their stories. I was, though, unprepared for chaplains to story part of their response (Feldman et al, 2004, 148) to my questions and had to reappraise this feature in terms of Coffey and Atkinson’s observation that “Social actors organise their lives and experiences through stories and in doing so make sense of them.” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, 68). Feldman et al

(2004, 147) make a similar point in relation to individuals' making sense of organisations and their place within them:

Stories are useful both to participants and observers of organizations because they are a basic tool that individuals use to communicate and create understanding with other people and for themselves. Stories are used to make sense of organizational life.

Czarniawska (2004, 42) draws attention to the mimetic value of stories, not as plot but as but as carriers of information about organizations. She goes on to elucidate other important aspects of "the role stories play in the drama of organizational power and resistance" as allowing access to the emotional life of an organization, and as revealing the nostalgia present in organizations. She concludes that "stories might not tell all about work-worlds, but they do tell a lot." (2004,42) This suggests how personal narrative and storying can acquire political significance, as in Daniel's narrative (*Appendix 10*) and Gough's story at the beginning of Chapter 1.

It became necessary, then, to examine the form of the stories both for the manifest intention of their telling and for their latent content and potentially multiple significances which might re-contextualise the story or interpenetrate with other situations, individuals and experiences. I have chosen to delimit the term "story" in a similar way to Feldman et al (2004, 148) as "a sequence of events, experiences or actions with a plot that ties together different parts into a meaningful whole." Coffey and Atkinson (1996,55) cite Denzin's broad definition "as a story of a sequence of events that has significance for the narrator and her audience.... narratives are temporal and logical." Since the stories which I have been told occurred in response to opportunities to reflect and observe I have worked on the basis of story as a subset of an encompassing narrative (Feldman et al 2004, 149) or narrative superstructure (Cortazzi, 1993, repr 2003, 71) within which it is embedded. The narrative, then, is the whole response which may comprise several components, including more than one story. It is closely contextualised not only by the nature of the invitation in the process of co-construction by researcher and respondent but by the space within which the construction occurs, including the interview site (chapel, office, staff canteen

or wherever) and the time of the interview (lunchtime, evening, the day after an incident), so their wider applicability appears to be limited. On the other hand, it is possible, likely even, that the accounts which emerge in interview have been told on earlier occasions and in different circumstances and in response to a different prompt. To this extent the accounts may be, albeit unwittingly, rehearsed and refined (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 57) so that details may be differently selected, prioritised and emphasised. Such accounts are performative in the sense that the telling of them is integral to the narrator's total sum of actions. Therefore, while the components of narrative and story may have tightly circumscribed applicability, the telling of them has a validity which is embedded not so much in the details of a life history but in the authenticity of its telling and in the susceptibility of that telling to formal analysis.

As I indicated in 3.1.7, this can give rise to the kind of ethical and personal dilemma noted by Frank (2002,115) which is especially poignant for practitioner researchers in small, clearly bounded professional groups and arises from the implicitly ethical relationship between researcher and respondent in which the latter becomes part of "that person's on-going struggle.... towards a moral life." The relationship between the two, however, does not and should not imply tacit acceptance of the morality of the story, nor that it is capable of bearing the relevance apparently intended. The same relationship should also embrace the possibility that a story might even signify the opposite of what appears from prompts or other contextual factors to have been the intention of telling it (Frank 2002, 115; Feldman et al 2004, 151). The relationship, however, is predicated not only upon the interplay of researcher/respondent but also upon a dialogue between peer practitioners, colleagues, friends, and even spouses. Kvale (2006, 497) draws attention to "the ambiguity of the interview relationship between a close personal and an instrumental relation, with the interviewer being both a participant in, and an observer of, the interview relationship."

Critical analysis in this setting has the potential to appear as a vitiation of the trust upon which the research was thought to have been based, as if personal

stories have been stolen and reworked into an antithetical, threatening form: one respondent went so far as to warn me that, “in doing this, you risk losing friends.” Other respondents, though, appreciated that narratives should be treated as accounts and performances (3.1.4, 38). I examine the interviews (dialogues in effect) analytically as performative acts “through which identities are enacted, actions are justified and recounted events are retrospectively constructed” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, 167). It is all the more important for a practitioner researcher to “retain a degree of distance from the narrative materials we collect.” (2006,169)

All of this argues the need for a template which can be laid across the stories to identify broad categories of similarity. Since my focus is on the people and their experiences, I have avoided analytical techniques whose complexity of detail might veer away from this. “The use of formal, structured tools of language description inevitably provides a perspective which draws the analysis away from participants’ situated knowledge and understandings.” (Tusting & Maybin 2007, 578). This implies tensions between “a more ‘closed’ focus on linguistic text and a more ‘open’ sensitivity to context and to the role of the researcher.” (2007, 576).

My focus, then, is on the narratives and stories as social phenomena (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, 170) within the temporal context of the respondent’s biography as the storying of their life and the material context of its telling, not only geographical but analogously temporal, an analysis of the situated uses of story rather than the processes of story.

The template I have used initially is a version of the Labov and Waletzky six part structure (Cortazzi 1993, 44-49):

### **Narrative template**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Abstract  
Orientation  
Complication  
Evaluation  
Result  
Coda

#### **QUESTION**

What was this about?  
Who? What? When? Where?  
Then what happened?  
So what?  
What finally happened?

I adopted this model because it demonstrates the constructed qualities of the story. Since the stories were not invited but were introduced into the greater narrative by the respondents it is possible to assert that many chaplains – probably not only Anglicans – construct or reconstruct their biographies through storying. They are certainly not alone in this but the significance for this group is that story making and performing is, as my data show, a part of their ministry valued both by themselves and by those to whom they minister.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996, 61) recognise that this is neither the only possible analytical model nor one to be applied rigidly; Cortazzi (49) suggests that it can be supplemented by lexical signalling (54):

### **Lexical signals**

<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<b>LEXICAL SIGNALS - TYPICAL WORDS</b>
Situation	situation, circumstance, time, place, person, (use of present and past tenses).
Problem	problem, drawback, need, requirement, concern, bad, awkward, risk, hard, difficulty, crisis, change, accident.
Solution	solution, answer, remedy, cope, suggestion, overcome, improvement, iron out, prevent, develop, tackle, treat, help, implement.
Evaluation	success, failure, better, worse, reduce, control, benefit, enable, delighted, excellent, pleased, disappointed, thorough, great enjoyment, blessing, understand, super, welcome, neat, nice, okay, happy, does wonders, blossom, develop, come on.

Analysis of some of the stories embedded in the data is used to demonstrate potential intertextuality in that some of the stories are applicable to other situations in the context of prison chaplaincy, and to suggest attitudes and emotions not necessarily expressed overtly. It is also the highest level of specificity in this thesis (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 116-117) since it refers to cultural knowledge revealed both in the telling and the analysis.

Roger's story is capable of multiple applications; two further examples appear in *Appendix 10*. He prefaces it with an indication that he has told it several times before, presumably to prisoners:

### **Roger**

There have been lots of changes but the basic things we do of ministry to prisoners I think have not changed. We sit down with guys and we listen to them, we advise them, they share with us and, and they want to tell their stories. We did a straw poll recently asking prisoners at Greenwood what they wanted and what they wanted was, "I want somebody to sit down with me and listen to my story."

And that's what five hundred of the guys want – I can't do it physically; it takes too much....too much of my resources really but that's what we aim to do, is to sit down with guys.

When I came here there was a lot of group work going on by the previous chaplain, very successful group work, but when you ask the men what they wanted: "I want to sit down with you, chaplain. I don't want to do it in a group. I don't want to tell my story in a group, as I do in Psychology. I want to be....I want you..." and he wanted me because I'm wearing the black shirt and the white collar. Because he's not going to do this with everyone and there was those private bits he wanted to share.

I tell this story of a guy, a big guy, he was the size of that door, comes one morning and said, "Can I tell you something?"

"Ah," I said, "Confidential?"

"Very."

I said, "Go on then."

He looked straight at me and said, "My dog died last night," and he burst into tears, and then said, "Outside these walls I can't tell anyone else that because I'm the boss man here, I'm the leader, I'm the tough guy," and he broke his heart...you know?

So why did he come to the chaplain? Something very simple but I think a very powerful story of who we are and what we are and how we minister to people, that somebody like that, because he wasn't a church man or anything, but he wanted to find a place where he could come and share that very special bit of his story with someone and let go, you know. The guys would say, "I can be myself here."

Roger is a chaplain with over twenty years' experience in all categories of male prison. I had asked him about his perception of change over time and within different establishments. His response suggests that, while there has

been contextual change, there exists a fundamental core of actions which have not changed. His narrative shows an almost circular trajectory, beginning and ending with reference to “guys”, “share” and “story” so that this is effectively a closed narrative unit with its own internal structure as well as external shape. Whilst the structure of the story itself is lucid and relatively straightforward, it forms part of a more complex narrative in which the narrator indicates each shift to a new stage. I analyse Roger’s narrative on the basis of its lexical signals combined with the evaluation model.

“There have been lots of changes but....” is followed by elaboration which consciously emphasizes what prisoners wanted (“asking...what they wanted and what they wanted was”). The narrator then changes voice as if to a prisoner so as to emphasize that this is a story about stories (“I want somebody to sit down...”) Roger’s personal reflection seems to change direction; (“it takes too much....too much of my resources really,”) so that the reflection is possibly less personal than it might have been, a deflection from his own story.

“When I came here....” signals a new stage which begins biographically but again constructs utterances which sound individual and particular but turn out to be metonymic insofar as they seem coined to refer to a total response. This embodies a refinement in that story telling is located in relation to place (Psychology) and person (“I want you.”) Both the place (by implication the chapel) and the person (the chaplain) embody the quality of privacy, symbolised by “the black shirt and the white collar.” The semiotic take upon the chaplain’s conventionally religious attire (*not* referred to as a “clerical” shirt) carries the latent message that the place and the person connote trustworthiness beyond the area of religious faith and practice, a point picked up in the evaluation, (“he wasn’t a churchman or anything”).

“I tell this story...” Roger signals that he has a repertoire story to substantiate his assertions and it is possible to consider the first three paragraphs as an elaborated abstract though the two parts stand as necessary components in the narrative superstructure. The orientation, is both economical and

rhetorical: “..a guy, a big guy...size of that door....one morning”. The complication is equally deft, reduced almost to the bones of the reconstructed or reimagined dialogue so that the narrator plays both parts in what is essentially a dramatised account. The narrator, playing himself, progresses the action (“Go on then.”) into the result, making a seamless account and, at the end, drawing in the listener/practitioner who is assumed to be able to imagine the situation (“you know?”).

“So why did he come to the chaplain?” Roger signals his evaluation of the story and its contextual significance, maintaining an elegant economy of style, (“very simple but... very powerful...who we are...what we are and how we minister..”) The sentence seems to be built upon its stylistic features of reinforcement through repetition and the assonantal who, what, how to emphasize the ontological aspects of how “we” are. The narrative ends with a brief ontological observation, again expressed as though by a prisoner set in a final scene similar to that which opened the narrative; its recursion to the opening lines makes it a classic coda.

Roger’s narrative is both complex and clearly structured with the story strategically placed and consciously dramatised. The whole narrative, not only the story, is characterized by literary features and may be thought of as a performance. Again, the story is capable of serving more than one purpose; it could (and does), for instance, invest the chapel space with specific value (“Outside these walls I can’t..”) over against Psychology; (physical areas of prisons are often referred to by their function.)

Roger’s assertion of perceived independence echoes findings by Todd & Tipton (2011,29) that “The chaplain was..... not aligned with rehabilitation, psychological evaluations or the prison regime in the way that Listeners, (volunteer prisoners trained by Samaritans) prison officers and psychologists were.”

Roger acknowledges the rehearsed nature of his story, that the event has been constructed in this form (allowing for minor variations in detail and lexis) for a specific purpose. It is not surprising, then, that it exhibits the

characteristics of performed art narrative. These elements may, however, be part of a repertoire of narrative methodology to be deployed with or without preparation. Two extracts from interviews with Daniel and Gough appear as *Appendix 10*.

Roger and the two narrators in *Appendix 10* locate themselves differently; he seems to share the stage with an individual prisoner while Gough puts his prisoner centre stage. Daniel is at the centre of his account so that it is the most immediately biographical. The prologue to this thesis is from another extended narrative by Gough.

In this chapter and *Appendix 10* I have indicated my use of a specific methodology and the stages of progress from conception to printed page. This account of orientation towards institutions and individuals in the first part is balanced by their orientation, especially in the second part, towards the researcher who is also a practitioner.

In Part 2 I use the data gathered by these methods to reveal chaplains' accounts of their activities across a broad range of work with prisoners in different types of establishment and in relation to more specific issues in their related experience.

## **PART 2 FINDINGS (i)**

### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **WORKING WITH PRISONERS**

4.1	Themes which emerge from narrative analysis	74
4.2	Praxis	79
	4.2.1 Statutory activity – reception into prison	80
	4.2.2 Demeanour, dress and appearance	83
4.3	Faith and mission	84
4.4	Listening: “Confidant(e)s rather than confessors.”	87
4.5	Pastoralia	90
	4.5.1 Purposivity and purpose	92
	4.5.2 No news is good news.	94
	4.5.3 Constraints	95
	4.5.4 Chaplains and restorative justice	97
4.6	Issues arising from working with prisoners	104
	4.6.1 Chaplains’, prisons’ and prisoners’ time	107
	4.6.2 The chaplain and institutional time	108
	4.6.3 The chaplain and prisoners’ time	110
	4.6.4 Public space and private place	111

#### **4.1 Themes which emerge from narrative analysis**

It initially appeared to me that respondents had said little about working with prisoners. My concentration upon the issues which feature in subsequent chapters had caused me not to see the dark matter swirling around the issues, the context for discussion and response. The point is made through analysis of narratives which, in almost every case, proved their intertextual potential. For this reason, while I persist with possibly over-rigid distinctions between classifications in later sections, I begin with three

narratives which purport to be historical but which reveal the narrators' internalization of their experience of working with prisoners. The three passages are based on activity but they speak also of the making and reforming of relationships as active "doing" rather than fixed being.

### **Adam**

You have asked about the prophetic aspect to ministry..... The classic model is the Old Testament prophets,.... you know Jonah wanting to run the other way and the Lord saying, "Tough, you are a prophet." So I think that we can find ourselves repeatedly in prophetic situations ..... accepting a vocational call is to acknowledge there are moments when we may be being looked at for a prophetic response and that part of the humility we have to have in Christian ministry is never seeking for those moments but simply praying for the grace to work it out. An easy one, or one which springs to mind, right from my early days in [ ]; when I started there they still had slopping out. And there were..... it was very frequent for parcels of excrement wrapped up in toilet paper to be lobbed out into the exercise yards. I think that it was the exercise yard for the hospital wing. One day, a particularly vulnerable prisoner had, and I felt very unfairly, been ordered by one of the staff to go and clean up the exercise yard..... and for a prisoner to be ordered to go and do such demeaning work. The prisoners told me what was going on, and the only response I could think to offer at the time, rather than arguing with staff, I went out on to the exercise yard. He ..... had a spare pair of rubber gloves and I simply said, "I have come to help you." And then, windows out on to the yard and everyone watching and we got the job done in half the time and the prisoner says, "Thank you very much," and a lot of shame-faced staff around at the time. So I think that there are sort of prophetic moments which you find yourself in and that is one which has stuck with me..... it is a part of the erm erm vocation of the prophets always to speak the truth. There are moments when we have to do that and accept the consequences of that.

Adam recounted this episode in response to a prompt about chaplains' prophetic imperative and frames his narrative with reference to it. It has been suggested by Forrester (2000, 86), Pattison (1994, 202) and Clemmer (1958, 235-236) that paid chaplains are too compromised to exercise a prophetic ministry. The chaplain has, nevertheless, to maintain a plausible working relationship with other prison staff, especially officers. Adam's narrative, however, indicates that it is possible to witness against abuse and oppression (as he saw it) without vitiating essential working networks.

Whilst the wing staff may have taken the easiest option of selecting the prisoner least likely to object (“particularly vulnerable”), Adam takes what might be thought the most difficult option of assisting in collecting the excrement. He may be said to discharge a prophetic function and to be perceived to do so (“shame faced staff”) without provoking active conflict (“rather than arguing with staff”). That he was told of the situation by prisoners might indicate an expectation or hope that the chaplain would somehow intervene; if so, it indicates a measure of understanding or trust between chaplain and prisoners. A theological perspective would be that, although Adam cites OT precedent, he enters the prisoner’s situation and, by sharing his abasement in an almost Christ-like way, restores something of his lost dignity, a loss begun at initial reception (2.3) and reinforced by the order to collect the excrement parcels. Adam can be seen to fulfil both a vocational function and a secular office. His account embodies an active working out of relationships with both staff and prisoners; in this context it contrasts with accounts by Ben, Esther and Gough.

It also contrasts with Robin’s account of reporting violence against a prisoner by members of a cell search team (usually drawn from across the establishment and acting on intelligence received) of which wing staff disclaim knowledge or responsibility:

“Nothing to do with us, it is nothing to do with us; the search team were up here.” So they were sort of acknowledged and erm so I think that I did, I think that I took that one to the Governor, I think. I wasn’t making any complaint I was simply saying, “This is what happened..... it wasn’t going to be a situation where the chaplaincy had complained that an officer beat up a prisoner you know....

Robin seems at first to be uncertain about having taken it to the Governor and is possibly reluctant to say so; this is a prison with a record of alleged staff violence. He does what he feels he can in the circumstances but the action is unseen by prisoners and, importantly, by staff so that their relations with the chaplain would not be vitiated. His account is a vignette of the difficulties around truth reporting, of precarious relationships which can be easily fractured, and the ambivalence of the chaplain’s situation. (5.2)

Ben tells a structured story from which comparable information emerges, but in a contrasting setting.

### **Ben**

Being a chaplain I can move between the various silos that are in the prison. I had one lad one day on one of the wings [who] kicked off, and I knew him quite well and I thought, "This is most unusual," and so I went down to see him and I said, "What the heck is going on?" He said, "My dad who is disabled and 74 came down to see me on Saturday and I'd sent him a VO. He booked the visit, he came down from London on the bus and it nearly killed him. He arrived at the gate, was told he wasn't on the list and was told to go away." I thought, "My goodness, there is something not right here," so I went to see the guy who worked in the [visits]bookings office and he said, "Well I was on leave last week. Oh lord," he said, "the person who took the booking put it down on the wrong time and it didn't print out on the computer printout." So I went straight to the number one [governor] and said, "We've got a problem here." She immediately wrote to the father, apologising and offering to pay expenses for him to come down again. We went to see the lad and apologised in person to him and wrote a letter to him. The guy said, "Well anybody can make a mistake." Now nobody else has got the, I suppose, the authority or the - better use the word ability - because it is a matter of getting access to people, to weave in between the various blocks just to sort of find out when something has gone wrong like that and try and get it right quickly, and I think that is the sort of thing that chaplains can do.

Ben's story develops from foregoing discussion about the COE and its reach; it suggests a licence for the COE chaplain to go everywhere and approach everyone in the prison, a freedom which Ben considers that he uses to eliminate misunderstanding and restore relationships. That he was allowed to enter the cell of someone who had just "kicked off" demonstrates a relationship of trust not only between chaplain and prisoner ("I knew him quite well") but between chaplain and staff because the Visits booking clerk's co-operative response suggests that Ben has made an enquiry rather than an accusation. It seems too that chaplain and Governor work productively together since he is able to go "straight to" her indicating his readiness ("we") to share the problem, having identified it, and its resolution, one which, through the act of apology, affirms the dignity of both the prisoner and his father. Ben sees chaplaincy as a lubrication of the prison's processes and the chaplain as one who can "weave between the silos". What can be inferred

from his story is the extent to which the chaplain's working relationships can facilitate and maintain institutional control and stability without appearing to compromise his quest for conciliation. In 5.4 I indicate alternative relationality between chaplains and governors.

Esther's story about attempted arson in the prison chapel shows that relationship is both formative and performative:

### **Esther**

I think they like the chapel because it's not a particularly prisony chapel, you know. It doesn't say this is prison and I think they appreciate that. Years ago we had a girl in who was down as a Satanist and had obviously got mental health problems; I don't think the two were related though they might well have been. And I was doing the (detoxers') service on a Sunday afternoon and came back to the chapel to discover all mayhem going on. She'd got into the chapel because we didn't leave it locked at that point. We do now. And she'd tried to set fire – you can still see the burn marks on top of the cupboard inside the door – had smashed one of these panels behind the altar and that brass cross, if you look at it, has actually got quite a bend on it and the women were outraged, they were absolutely outraged. They were really concerned that I shouldn't see it in the mess ..... and there was a whole bunch of women [prisoners on association] who had turned up from nowhere and were helping staff clean up and tidy up before I saw it because it wasn't, not so much for me, because it's also their chapel as well..... **I was going to say is it because it's their space?** ..... they didn't want me to be upset because they were outraged too because this is their chapel, this is their space.

This story, structured apparently spontaneously, about the violation of a public sacred space becomes a narrative underpinned by mutual perception and respect, a continuing threat to security, and by Esther's rhetorical touches. The account, also referred to in 8.3, is framed by her assertions of implied prisoner ownership ("not a particularly prisony chapel..... their space,") of a safe or sacred area. Esther's own profile here is significant; returning from conducting a brief service (her third of the day) she does not theologise the situation at the time or in the telling and avoids direct association of Satanism with mental illness. She recognises prisoners' and staff strong concern for her feelings through repetition and reinforcement ("the women were outraged, they were absolutely outraged"). She deflects

this, however, by implying a mutuality of respect and perceived stress so that the responses of chaplain, prisoners and staff merge, each identifying with the other; “they didn’t want me to be upset because they were outraged too because this is their chapel, this is their space.” The narrative says little about the more detailed or perceived nature of the space, whether it is sacred or safe or both; nor does it say anything explicit about denominational or faith community “ownership”. (Gilliat-Ray 2005a, 302) It suggests, though, that the prisoners associate the chaplain’s person with a space which at least implies the possibility and dignity of personal ownership. A simple analysis suggests that the association may arise from Esther’s being the only full time chaplain and the only one to conduct services in it frequently and regularly. It is a narrative which reveals the chaplain not as especially Anglican, but as part of an informal system of mutual identification and regard in her quotidian activities.

Each of these narratives relates a specific incident as recalled and represented by the narrator. As part of a personal and possibly an institutional archive they reveal chaplains’ perceptions of the quality of working relations with other staff, the negotiated relationship with prisoners, even a tacit mutual respect, the constant implicit threat to security, and something of the association of place with function and person. These elements reappear with others in the subsequent sections of this chapter and in the following chapters, as they did at the beginning of Chapter 1.

## **4.2 Praxis**

This section explores the main components of practice to which chaplains referred unprompted; it is not intended as a list of duties. It includes both statutory activity as defined in the 1952 Prisons Act and non-statutory activity. I use the term praxis in the same sense as Hammersley (1993, 182) to connote the conscious, informed response to and working out of statute and principles, secular and religious as distinct from the statements themselves.

Some of the statutory activities barely figured in responses. There was no mention of visiting healthcare centres and very little about visiting segregation units, though these are daily activities in the prisons where they exist and would help to define the chaplain in liminal or heterotopic terms. The conduct of religious services is discussed in chapter 6.

#### **4.2.1 Statutory activity – reception into prison**

In 6.1 I explore the potential ambivalence of the prison reception procedure and chaplains' part in it. The procedure is not uniform across the system and may acquire different layers according to the category of the prison. Local prisons experience high, unpredictable reception rates while longer stay prisons tend to experience lower, more predictable admissions. George, chaplain in a category A maximum security establishment where men arrive from other prisons, speaks of a protracted process which reflects the relatively slow churn of inmates but also emphasises the chaplain's embedding in the institutional reception sequence:

Everyone has an induction booklet; there is (*sic*) about 18 modules that they need to have signed off and people can't move on from induction until they have been signed off on all 18, of which one of them is chaplaincy..... So we are very much a part of the..... part of the prison regime really.

By contrast, chaplains in category B local prisons speak of the importance of reception but also of the pressure of numbers; Alexandra is representative:

Realistically, you are only going to be able to say, "Hello," and talk to them briefly but when we see them we give them our leaflet, check that they are alright, check that their relatives know that they are here and record all that, you know we record who we have seen.

She expands upon the significance of chaplains' statutory reception visits for those "who haven't been in prison before perhaps and who are absolutely distraught, they really don't know what to do. And in a sense they are not going to show anybody else that but actually the chaplain is safe." Her perspective is one in which the secular office with its attendant duties appears to intertwine with a humane concern for welfare and possibly life itself, a recognition of urgently individual need and distress which is

implicitly at odds with the deprivation and degradation involved in entry into prison. Unlike other reception staff, her reach extends beyond the prison wall to include the prisoner's family. The humanitarian and the institutional functions are fused in the recording of pastoral data on the computerised system. A further layer of formal prisonization occurs in the giving of the chaplaincy leaflet, detailing chaplaincy staff, faith activities and, in several cases, information about how to access the prison visitor scheme, which frequently falls within the purview of a chaplain. Taken together, these elements seem simultaneously to address the institutional need for assessment and diagnosis as well as the individual's need for reassurance and stabilization. The observation that "the chaplain is safe" acquires an ironic edge insofar that she will not tell other prisoners, who might try to capitalise upon personal information, but will make some information available in the total administrative data pool (Scott 2011, 90).

Confidentiality is a live issue for chaplains but did not arise during research interviews except for Ben's comment that people "know that we keep confidences" but "prisoners know that there are boundaries." The boundaries concern possible harm to self or others, planned disruption and certain categories of offence.

Unforeseen problems arise as a result of unexpected imprisonment, such as "who's looking after the kids?" (Esther) or "the dog's locked in the flat" (Jeanette). Tom had recently transferred from a category B local to a category C long stay prison.

I think that a lot of the concerns in my previous place were understandably about the trial, (being) separated from family, you know, work, housing, all those sorts of issues which are the immediate concerns of somebody coming straight off the streets, through the courts into the prison. Here they seem to be a little bit more petty in the fact that they're important to people here, "My canteen's not come, I can't get a light bulb, I can't lock the budgie cage." The visit side is not so important because a lot of people lost contact with families and friends and they don't get any visitors.

Tom's comparison exemplifies the divergence of practice within a common statutory activity, determined by the nature of the institution and the extent

to which the prisoner has become subsumed by the carceral system (“important to people here..... lost contact”). Receptions then assume importance at different levels of intensity while remaining an unpredictable proportion of the day’s work; Esther remarked that “there were 17 on Saturday morning. We had three this morning and 5 yesterday but 12 the day before. Now in term of big prisons that may not be very many but if there’s only one of you on it can be quite a lot to chase up.” It is one of the variables that can necessitate a daily rewriting of the chaplain’s timetable within the invariable parameters of the institutional schedule.

One of the “big prisons” to which she refers has taken on the task of data gathering for other departments as well as chaplaincy so that its contribution to the total institutional data is a central component and the time is budgeted for. The Anglican chaplain, Alf, observes that it takes the data gatherer into the “grubby minutiae” of prisoners’ lives as a first step to attempting to face them. He remarks upon their courtesy and says, “I always thank them for being so courteous,” suggesting a level of mutual respect. The ethical basis for this investigative data gathering remains ambiguous: is the chaplain operating as a bureaucrat or as a concerned minister?

“Doing the routine stuff which is the bread and butter of all chaplaincies” (Colin) is unavoidable, unpredictable, various, and locates the chaplain somewhere between confidant(e) and informer, though prisoners seem to know this and, as Roger and Alexandra imply in a different context, exercise decision about who rather than what they will tell.

Reference to the segregation unit statutory visit occurs throughout the data. Visiting the prison hospital did not occur in any interview. I did not ask directly about it, possibly a reflection of my own unease in hospital settings, although I accompanied one chaplain (Dennis) on such a visit. On the other hand, three chaplains used the metaphor of an A & E ward for chaplaincy in local prisons.

#### 4.2.2 Demeanour, dress and appearance

Chaplains are caught in a tension between the institution and the individual. Roger finds that men share their stories with him “because I’m wearing the black shirt and the white collar,” the recognisable uniform of RC and COE clergy though, in a setting where uniforms predominate, not all choose to wear it. Similarly, imams and other Muslim chaplains are often recognisable by dress, but there is one aspect of image and appearance common to all faith representatives and prison staff. All must carry keys attached to a regulation gauge chain which is secured to a belt. Staff are also expected to wear visible identity markers, numbered epaulettes for uniformed officers, badges for other staff, including governors and chaplains, which detail name, function and establishment. It is impossible, therefore, for chaplains to minister in prisons without adopting in at least minimal measure the conventions and appearance of the imprisoning authority. Anecdotally, this is enough for some prisoners to decline to talk to chaplains. Becky is aware of how chaplains can be compromised by semiotics: “As soon as you pick up keys you become, in some respects, one of them, don’t you? There is that distance and so you have to work harder to be, to hold on to your humanity and to represent something different in here.”

Dennis invokes an institutional analogy to convey the need for contextual self-awareness:

Doctors going through a corridor and the patients all standing up against the wall and there was this sort of implied authority with their white coats flapping..... if you are staff with your keys you walk down the landing and people move out of the way.

He articulates the need to navigate through the power imbalance which underlies all relations between prisoners and staff, including chaplains, especially in women’s prisons. His hospital analogy echoes, amongst others, Gervase (“Some people call it ambulance work, patching people up who are in trouble,”) and Roger (“we put the plaster on and we pass you on,”) who use medical imagery in defining chaplaincy in local prisons. No respondents, however, extended the metaphor to speak of healing although the concept of

transformation clearly underlies the practice of many chaplains, especially evangelicals.

Chaplains' dress and demeanour reflect their status but some are wary of emphasising the power/ knowledge imbalance and are aware of a need to "represent something different in here." The following sections explore briefly what that something might be.

### **4.3 Faith and mission**

The "something different" to which Becky refers might be expected to include faith and mission activities amongst prisoners. Prison Rules forbid chaplains to proselytize. Only three respondents foregrounded these activities as the main reason for their ministry; all three identified themselves as conservative evangelicals. Adam takes a restrained view which typifies that of several other respondents:

So if I am going to see a prisoner in his cell because his granny has died I will say, "I am sorry that I have to come and bring you this bad news, if there is anything that I can help.....". I will probably drop a hint by saying, "Is it all right if we include her in our prayers in the chapel?" and then prisoners may say, "Oh that will be good, I would like to be up there," or something like that. But, generally speaking, apart from things like that I would not normally introduce matters of religious faith into a conversation.

In the telling Adam abbreviates such an encounter and normalizes it in referring to "his granny" rather than more potentially traumatic messages. Chaplains not infrequently have to give news of parents' and childrens' deaths, sometimes in distressing circumstances. It is perhaps unsurprising that respondents did not refer to this aspect of ministry. Adam's primary concern is a humanitarian one for the prisoner; the ministry of the church is offered almost diffidently. He would not expect to introduce religious faith into a conversation. Colin's response parallels this; in talking about SORI (Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside), a secular, RJ based course but largely delivered by chaplains, he says:

SORI has been great because it is spiritual but not religious. It is everything that I believe in, it is about making changes in people's

lives, it is about people taking responsibility for what they have done, it is about people having the chance, to use the spiritual word, to repent, but I would never use it on the course.

(I say more about SORI in 4.5.4) Without distinguishing the different qualities of “spiritual” and “religious”, Colin distances himself even further than Adam from introducing “matters of religious faith into a conversation.” He eschews the word “repent” preferring to say that, “It is about ownership of guilt, it is about making a new start.” He senses that a religious register would deter prisoners and curtail the possibilities of life change. This stands in contrast to 19<sup>th</sup> century chaplains such as Field at Reading and Kingsmill at Pentonville, who sought life change and social adaptation specifically through faith and the promise of salvation. Ben’s response crystalizes the non-interventionist approach:

I think that they probably don’t need somebody doing a hard sell on religion. I think that what they do need is somebody who is hopefully compassionate, somebody who is prepared to listen and somebody who is not prepared to duck big questions when they emerge and maybe to be able to put them into a sort of context.

He stresses the qualities of compassion (implicitly ontological), patience and integrity, veiling his priesthood. Gervase, however, similarly self-identified as a liberal catholic says: “I see myself as a priest in the prison, first and foremost and that’s what I’m here for..... they sit down and talk as one might talk with a counsellor but that engagement will have a spiritual aspect to it because it’s an engagement with a priest.” All of the above respondents occupy the same broad ecclesiological area characterised by sacramentality, yet their perspectives on faith ministry range from Colin’s apparent abdication from the language, if not the forms of Christian ministry, to Gervase’s open avowal of sacramental priesthood.

Daniel, Freddie and Gough were among the small minority who identified themselves as conservative evangelicals. Here, too, there is a range of practice. Freddie celebrates the Eucharist weekly “on a Thursday morning now with the group and that is a beautiful time, you know, very serious, everybody together sort of thing, you know.” Like other chaplains, he sees the Sunday morning statutory service as an opportunity for disorder if it is a

eucharist: “Most of the lads weren’t confirmed and it meant nothing to them, so it meant that you would end up with sixty, seventy lads in and five would come forward for communion. Everybody else just used it for a general chit chat.” Their words support Gilliat-Ray’s assertion that sacred spaces in prisons “were (and remain today) sites for contesting power relations.” (Gilliat-Ray 2005, 289). Other chaplains do likewise but Freddie left me with the impression of a private event for an inner, selective group.

He sets store by prisoners’ religious conversion and living out the new commitment which he sees as potentially reformatory in a wider social setting:

There is a good chance that when they get out and they have done a lot of work on relationships and resisting temptation and those sorts of things, when they get out then there is a chance that they will actually continue. That has got to be good hasn’t it?

I had suggested his practice echoed that of social restoration by salvific means to the end of producing compliant members of society. Freddie rejects this, saying that he wants “the lads” to be “ambassadors” for Jesus and represents his ministry as “people making faith commitments all the time and then you disciple them and then you lose them and you get another one. It is non-stop action. Ministry of Jesus!” This model of chaplaincy, stressing conversion and desistance, seems not to be widespread.

Similarly, Daniel’s version of ministry is founded on evangelism:

We place a high priority whenever we can on not just preaching on a Sunday but on Bible studies and on getting the guys here to study their Bibles for themselves, Of course the difficulty there, especially with this age group, is reading ability, you know, because to study the scriptures you need to be able to read and so many of them struggle with basic reading and writing. ....But the actual ethos for ministry is one of, “Go and tell the good news.” That is what I aim to do here, tell the gospel, good news

His ministry is founded on scripture rather than sacrament; he remarks elsewhere that he celebrates Holy Communion twice a year (6.4), as the Prisons Act requires, but there is no sense of an inner group as hinted at by Freddie. His efforts to help them complete Sycamore Tree Project materials

(4.4) and the allying of evangelism with developing literacy would have been recognised by Field and Kingsmill a century and a half earlier as resonant of chaplains' earlier responsibility for prisoner education. Like Freddie, he sees his role as a

..... supportive role obviously, primarily it is, but also it is a missionary role. So we want to stop the reoffending of the lads who come; we want them to find a faith because we know that if they find a faith they have got somebody else who they refer to and not just themselves.

Daniel identifies membership of the Christian community as a way of reducing reoffending. In this he is supported by local churches (not Anglican) and, I gathered, by the Governor.

3.2 includes an extended story by Gough illustrating his own perception of his role as missionary but expressed in more rhetorical, less analytical terms. Of the conservative evangelicals, Gough was most ready to speak of assisting and facilitating faiths other than Christianity: "I will facilitate as much as I am able..... for anybody ... of any faith to follow a religious path." This contrasts sharply with Freddie's resentment at sharing the chapel with Muslim prisoners and staff.

Chaplains articulate a spectrum of views about the introduction of overt discussion of faith matters into their ministry, ranging from outright reluctance to sustained opportunism. This can be said to represent the range of Anglican theology but it was difficult to find conservative evangelical Anglican chaplains. Based on my data, the majority of Anglican prison chaplains are liberal Catholics. This is a theory that needs to be tested by further research similar to that by Hancocks, Sherbourne et al (2008, 167) in the field of hospital chaplaincy.

#### **4.4 Listening: "Confidant(e)s rather than confessors."**

Ten respondents identified listening to prisoners as an important activity, both in the broader context of other prison staff and in itself. None of them, however, speak of it as a component of more structured counselling. For Alexandra listening is time related and explicitly contrasted with staff

perspectives which may have to do with prisoner relationships (“they are so.....’whatever”) as much as time:

I have been quite surprised by some of the officers who have said to me, “How can you possibly stay and listen to that person for that length of time?” you know, “They are so.....”, whatever, and I say, “Well that is my job, listening is my job; that is what I do.”

She does not assume the more formal, developed role of counsellor, even though listening implies responding. Instead she presents her listening as something for which “the officers” have no time and, possibly, little inclination: “Nobody else is going to have time for them. Everything is so busy and everything is so regimented.” Gough’s response to an enquiry about the most important aspect of his work similarly portrays him as providing a facility which the officers choose not to.

People often feel that nobody’s interested here, staff getting fed up because people are forever demanding stuff so, “Clear off,” and “Go away”, that sort of thing you know, so there’s no point. But to show that somebody’s actually interested in you and I’m interested in you.

He specifically eschews processes associated with structured counselling: “There’s nothing good I can say under those circumstances..... I’m just trying to be with him through emotional hard times and listen to his pain and suffering.” Gough seems to be offering compassion and companionship at an extreme point in the prisoner’s life, dependent neither upon faith talk nor upon counselling practice. Roger contrasts a listening ministry with group activities encouraged by his predecessor. (3.2)

This bears a striking resemblance to Becci’s respondents in east German and Swiss prisons (Becci 2011, 78 & Becci, Bovay et al 2011, 4) whose preference for talking to the chaplain was that he was perceived as independent and non-judgmental. Roger’s perspective advances the chaplain’s role from listening ear, providing a service otherwise unavailable, to that of confidant, chosen on the basis of a trust in the semiotics of ministry. He seems to present his listening as an alternative to the purposive listening of “Psychology” but he also tells prisoners, “When you can’t get your problems solved out there this is where you come; you don’t run away, you come

here.....if you feel like running away, come and have a coffee with me before you go.” Roger is chaplain to an open prison, acknowledged by staff and prisoners to be the most difficult carceral category, demanding self-discipline rather than imposed discipline. He implies a lightness of tone when talking to the prisoners but his words suggest active engagement with institutional imperatives as well as personal predicaments. The confidant recognises the consequences of absconding both for the prison and the prisoner and seems able to serve both sets of needs.

Angus’s perspective maintains the concept of chaplain as confidant but locates it in a restorative context, “They are actually dealing with things in the past and living for the future and in a prison set up they would be very selective in whom they would tell.” Daniel, too, tells of helping STP attenders to write their coursework and listening to their stories, though he does not take up issues raised by them.

Cedric considers the priority to be “them feeling that they have actually been able to express what they need to express, get the support that they need at that moment.” Listening for Cedric is contextualised and occasional as well as instrumental in imparting institutional procedure; he speaks of prisoners being “given some clear idea of what the next step is going to be or what it might realistically be.” This is to move beyond the notion of simply listening, as does Roger in saying that, “we listen to them, we advise them.” Neither chaplain explains what they mean by “clear idea” or “advise” though both work with long term prisoners so it is possible that information about procedure and progress are involved, with personal narrative figuring more in Roger’s encounters than in Cedric’s. If both imply an analytically responsive listening, Jeanette is explicit about listening critically and reviewing and reshaping narrative, possibly leading prisoners into areas they could wish to avoid: “It’s my job to work out exactly where the need lies, sometimes it’s not where they’re saying it lies or indeed where they might not have explored.”

It is unclear from the responses what the ethical and theological bases are for chaplains' listening and responding. Ben thinks that prisoners do not need somebody "doing a hard sell on religion" so much as, "Somebody who is hopefully compassionate, somebody who is prepared to listen and somebody who is not prepared to duck big questions when they emerge and maybe to be able to put them into a sort of context." He is wary of any overtly religious discourse and emphasises a non-doctrinaire, responsive stance, referring simply to "big questions" and "a sort of context". It could be inferred that "the chaplain" sustains a negatively defined role as not officer or not psychologist which enables the disclosure of personal and otherwise private details, some for recording on the institutional database. This would suggest that the perception of the person in role is more influential than the principle of disclosure *per se*. It may also underlie Cedric's reflection about satisfying immediate need and Ben's coining of a "safety valve" image. In fine, chaplains see themselves as confidant(e)s or compassionate companions rather than confessors or counsellors.

More specific and targeted approaches are examined in the next section.

#### **4.5 Pastoralia**

In this section I consider ministry to prisoners; in 5.3 I instance ministry to staff. I distinguish here between listening and other pastoral activity; the distinction is admittedly arbitrary and fluid, but "listening" is the respondents' term for what they present as a largely passive activity, bound up with the giving of time and attention unavailable from other agencies in the prison. The term "counselling" is rarely used although for some years there was a chaplains' training course entitled "Counselling Skills" which dealt largely with active listening; chaplains seem to recognise that the term "counselling" connotes a structured, supervised activity for which they are not formally qualified. The point is succinctly made by Colin, who employs trained, accountable counsellors as part of the SORI programme: "It's boundaried work..... it is obviously confidential .....lots of work is going on in counselling sessions that we know nothing about but which may well be helping people to address their offending behaviours." He draws a clear

distinction between such professional practice and what he calls “the routine stuff which is the bread and butter of all chaplaincies, helping people to settle into the prison as new to the prison, picking up stuff to do with family, relationships. We obviously get involved with bereavements...”

Hence, needing a term to cover other activities, I could not introduce the concept of pastoral counselling; I have, therefore, appropriated the term “pastoralia” to embrace the miscellany of actions indicated by Colin which chaplains undertake in the cause of prisoner welfare. Becci (2011, 70) distinguishes between pastoral care as “a moral action” to keep the prisoner together and “in line with joint aim of Church and State,” and spiritual care which “refers primarily to the prisoner’s needs in the spiritual realm and not to the institution.” (2.2)

My data suggest that time is an operative factor in determining spectra of pastoral activity; the needs and concerns of a short term prisoner are likely to differ from those of a long termer. In 4.2.1 Tom identifies different levels of pastoral needs, in the local prison being typically “immediate concerns of somebody coming straight off the streets, whereas here [cat C long stay] they seem to be a little more petty.” In this, he echoes Toch’s finding that prisoners who have spent varying in time in prison “have different environmental concerns” (Toch 1992, 174) and that “staff must be aware of this problem if they want to be humane custodians.” (1992, 28) Tom does not belittle such needs but rather recognises that they belong to a category of domestic or structural need as against those related to the disruption of external relations. Taken together with Colin’s summary of chaplains’ activities (“the routine stuff which is the bread and butter”) they indicate the range and variety of ministry, indicating that it is determined in some measure by time and location. The following section explores two chaplains’ responses to ministry in long term and especially secure prisons; in the prison system time and place issues can usually be mapped on to each other.

#### 4.5.1 Purposivity and purpose

Wahidin (2004, 117) and Cohen & Taylor (1972, 86-93) have written eloquently about the ambiguities and deleterious effects of time in prison. Two chaplains spoke of ministry to long term prisoners in terms which portray the chaplain as one who tries to encourage purposivity when a sense of purpose to life seems to have been removed. Becky (newly appointed to a long stay prison) speaks of working with elderly sex offenders who are unlikely ever to be released:

How do you prepare somebody to live the rest of their life in prison? And what is the purpose of somebody's life in this context? So the big theological question is a big psychological question that some of them are asking themselves and some haven't got anywhere near asking because it is just too frightening to look at..... (we) are thinking about how we might encourage some of the men to think about their dying and preparation for death and what they would like to happen in those circumstances should it happen in prison. We just want to try and do it in a gentle way to encourage people to think about some of those really quite painful things. I mean, you know, the biggest fear for some people is that they will die in prison, but actually you have got to name it and identify it because it is a reality.

Becky, who encourages expression through poetry and visual art, acknowledges that these are “big” questions for her as well as for the men (“How do you...What is..?”), that she needs a rationale for life and its “purpose” when the props and trappings of life outside the prison have been removed. This entirely transcends questions of “what to do with them” and the more immediate, bounded aims of CBT courses, though Becky makes a link here between theology and psychology; as if recognising this, she tells me elsewhere that she would like to tutor on the Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP, a group based, cognitive programme). She positions the chaplain as one who can or should address such questions; it can be deduced that she sees no other agency attempting to do so. She identifies a problem in helping the men to face a painful probability (“You have got to name it and identify it....”), whilst trying to do it “in a gentle way”. Although she begins this passage with two questions, a subsequent phrase suggests at least part of a possible answer: “what they would like to happen in those circumstances”.

This appears to restore to the prisoner a measure of decision and choice which was lost upon entry to prison, suggesting that the prison need not control death as it controls life. This feature is similar to Esther's (and other chaplains') accounts of conducting candle lightings and surrogate funerals.

George (chaplain in a category A maximum security prison) explores the same issue of purposivity in the apparent absence of purpose:

Here we are conscious, particularly in chaplaincy, and maybe even wider than chaplaincy, of actually giving people a life inside without any, any thought of what is going to happen in 30, 35 years' time. And some of our interventions, some of our courses that we offer are on those lines really. People say, "How does this fit into the strict criteria of the sentence plan?" Well it doesn't, but it does add, we think, to the quality of prisoner life, their life inside prison..... We give plants to people who are enhanced prisoners. It is a living thing in their cell that will not only give them pleasure and joy but also a sense of responsibility.....and we find that our interaction with prisoners who have all sorts of questions about how they care for their plant and so forth, is a good illustration of something as totally unrelated to a sentence plan, totally unrelated to when are we going to be released, but is simply relating to the quality of prisoner life inside.

George has developed one practical means of engendering purposivity ("giving people a life inside") which involves personal responsibility for the maintenance and nurturing of life and is capable of giving "pleasure and joy" in a bleak, tightly regulated environment. George depicts the ensuing dialogue as being outside the corpus of prison plans and programmes, but it enriches an indefinitely and closely constrained life. He suggests that awareness of such questions is not restricted to chaplaincy but it seems clear that, in a maximum security setting, only the chaplain is addressing them and that upon a necessarily restricted basis ("enhanced prisoners"). Like Becky, George – with many more years' experience - is responding to questions about the purpose of a life spent in prison; neither of them mentions that many of their prisoners live with the daily knowledge of having taken a life. Becky's and George's circumstances and comments recall the situation of E wing prisoners in Cohen and Taylor's study for whom no "reference to linear progress is possible." (1974, 94)

In my own ministry, I have listened to men attempting to make sense of their actions; one of them told me he lived with the knowledge every day and that “only those who have taken a life know what it is to live with that knowledge.” The memory of such dialogues has made this an unexpectedly difficult section to compose.

#### **4.5.2 No news is good news.**

In 29 prisons I accompanied chaplains as they visited prisoners in cell, block, hospital and workshops. Without exception, we were initially greeted with apparently apprehensive stares because, as I know from my own experience, the unexpected arrival of a chaplain often betokens bad news, a family death or serious illness. The giving of such news often falls to the chaplain and is an acknowledged part of the job on all sides; Pauline remarked, almost as an aside, “Obviously there’s bereavement; it happens all the time,” and Iain wrote, “I suspect that, like you, my early years in chaplaincy dealt a lot with breaking bad news...it seems to have been a feature of most days.” I was therefore surprised that, with three exceptions, no respondent mentioned this challenging and occasionally hazardous activity in interview. Roger sees chaplains as the inevitable default position where death is concerned:

I also had a guy in the group who said, “I don’t talk to chaplains.” I said, “Don’t make rules for yourself.” The same guy who said that, I found him sitting outside this door at quarter past seven one morning because his mum had died the night before and he didn’t have anyone to turn to in the prison, you know? And I think that’s part of the ministry, that we’re accessible, available and.... the last resort. I like that idea.

To enrich my data set I emailed a balanced subset of ten respondents, of whom five responded, three at length and in detail. Heather may have hinted at respondents’ reticence to talk about this most personal ministry when she wrote,

After as many years as I’ve been doing this..... some striking examples should spring to mind ... it is good that I still dread doing this; I should [because] it is life and death. When I stop having that good and healthy wish not to have to do this for someone I need to find another job & I will be truly institutionalised.

Heather also remarks upon some prisoners' concern for the news bearer: "When you say you are sorry to have to tell them that someone has died they seem to reassure you and let you know that it is not your fault." Robin observes that, with prisoners' increased access to phones chaplains break bad news less often but are called upon for support. All three respondents emphasise the necessity of liaising with officers and other agencies so that it is the chaplain who engages both with the individual's response and the bureaucratic mechanisms for dealing with such events, of which security is an important component.

All the respondents who mention bad news speak of giving chaplaincy support as requested and appropriate, recalling Percy's observation that,

The clergy continue to be in demand, offering a ministry that is public, performative and pastoral....At times of death, birth, love and loss the church is often able to provide focus, articulation, meaning and interpretation. It is there for the liminal moments in life, when transition and change often demand a transcendent point of reference. (Percy 2001,100)

#### **4.5.3 Constraints**

In a closely controlled setting, whether perceived as a total institution or not, it is not surprising to find that staff as well as inmates are under constraint, especially when their function is seen as, at most, peripheral to the institution's goals and routines. Again, the respondents show time and place to be influential upon ministry. The most restrictive regimes are those in category A and B prisons: Alexandra observes that "realistically, the time that you can see people is sort of from 8 to 11 or from sort of 2 to 4 and that is it." The chaplain's work pattern is, therefore, determined by the specific functions of the prison and the requirement to fit essential and mandatory activities into the core day. Alexandra also cites staffing issues as an obstacle to fulfilling her own statutory duties in the daily visit to the segregation unit. Commenting on the "seg" visit which I observed, she says that officers were "quite reluctant to unlock on the seg if they have only got one person [officer]"; both the prisoners she visited were "SO + 2 unlock" (i.e. three officers had to be present to unlock the cell door) so she could only talk

briefly through the inspection hatch with an apparently somewhat impatient officer behind her (fieldwork notes). Indeed, Alexandra used the issue of privacy to illustrate the effect of architecture upon ministry; “I don’t think that there is much privacy in any of this prison because there is very little space for seeing people on their own..... Your ministry changes on what is possible, doesn’t it?” She instances the prevalence of double cells on the main residential wings and adds that it is not very practical to take prisoners to the chapel “because we are quite a long way away”. The original chapel area was now used as a store and the chapel and chaplains had been relocated to an old prefabricated unit separate from the main buildings. Alexandra succinctly demonstrates the cross cutting of issues of time and place.

Cedric, too, speaks of local constraints:

The nuances of each establishment is (*sic*) such that you can’t necessarily do in one establishment what you did or would do in another establishment. And that you have to look very closely at the physical issues of the establishment and how they impact on the daily living of the residents.

He, however, broadens the focus to include the “regime and the way that it works and the way that staff are in relation to prisoners and prisoners are in relation to prisoners.” In saying this he points up the necessity to adjust ministerial style and practice, based on the recognition that “prison” is a generic term within which there are not only designated formal distinctions but local, informal factors of which chaplains must take account. Esther goes even further, highlighting cultural and practical variations within a single institution: “how things work on E wing are quite different from, say, B wing which is a small induction wing ..... less than half the size of E wing.” She emphasises this by referring to a new wing “where you have to start working out what the relationships are from scratch because it is completely different because it is a detox unit.”

George explains that “the loitering, wandering ministry I would have in other establishments” is simply not possible in a high security prison where even to take a prisoner to the chapel requires the escort of a patrol dog and handler.

Surprisingly few chaplains mentioned administrative tasks as an obstacle to pastoral ministry though it seems even from my limited field observations that ministry is increasingly being delegated to chaplaincy volunteers and sessional chaplains. Pauline thinks that responding to bureaucratic demands has reduced her pastoral ministry: "I really enjoy listening to people's stories and receiving them and helping them to understand and process [the stories]. But realistically it's not the biggest part of my job any more." Esther, who had previously had a half time admin assistant itemised some of the office tasks she performs and remarked, "I get to the end of the day, actually I've not been wasting my time I've not been sitting gazing vacantly into space but I don't actually seem to have seen much in the way of prisoners." More pithily, Becky exclaimed about her computer terminal, "not everybody can do the pastoral stuff and I can and I am good at it..... so get me off this bloody thing and let me do the job that I feel ordained to do." All those who lamented the increase in bureaucracy were women but it would not be feasible to say that this is a gendered issue since chaplaincies are differently resourced and not all women respondents complained. More significantly, the shift seems to relocate the co-ordinating chaplain from ministry to management. This has been confirmed by grading changes in 2012 which allowed for the grade at pay band 7 (equivalent to a governor grade) of managing chaplain at each Governor's discretion.

Chaplains are aware, then, that pastoral ministry is significantly determined by time and place. Issues of time, both historical and executive, can be extrapolated from the age of the building, the length of prisoners' sentences and the structure of the core day. These factors can be intertwined with the location of the prison (isolation within or outside the feeding community), its internal configuration and the location, both physical and attitudinally, of the chapel and world faith room, and chaplains' space.

#### **4.5.4 Chaplains and restorative justice**

Shapland (2008, 1) prefers the term 'restorative practice' for prison based programmes; whilst agreeing with this definition, I have stayed with

'restorative justice' (abbreviated to RJ) because it is the term used by my respondents.

There are three broad aims in this section:

- i. I show that two prison based programmes based on RJ tend to be seen by chaplains as a convergence of their philosophy and praxis with those of the establishment;
- ii. I suggest that RJ programmes seem to represent a new start for chaplains almost as much as for victims and offenders;
- iii. I theorize chaplains' engagement with prisoners in implicitly ritualized ways which it is feasible to think of as a kind of secular liturgy and drama.

i Convergence

The data are derived from five Anglican chaplains who are involved with victim awareness programmes, three of them with the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP) and two with SORI. STP is based on the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus in the gospel of Luke (19,i-x); it was developed and is delivered by Prison Fellowship International, an evangelical Christian organisation. STP currently operates in thirty prisons in England and Wales, SORI in six. An STP programme takes place one day a week for six weeks: SORI is an intensive 5 day programme contained within a single week. Both programmes are underpinned by the same value set, remorse, forgiveness, redemption and restoration, but hinting at deeper lying values such as empathy and mutuality. This is to use a manifestly faith-associated register which the SORI document entirely avoids.

The language used in SORI programme documents is corporate and managerial but it is the language, the idiolect, of the Prison Service. Had SORI not been presented in functional, cognitive terms it would never have been taken up. The chaplain is not only subsumed structurally but linguistically as well; the use of institutional idiolect is a pragmatic accommodation with a management culture against which chaplains might be thought to run

counter. I also suggest that the continuing operation of SORI can be seen as a convergence between a neo-paternalistic resettlement agenda on the one hand and a set of essentially theological values and practices on the other.

The programme specification of STP, coming from an evangelical Christian organisation, is expressed in more affective terms, speaking of offenders' attitudes and understanding, willing to use the terms restoration, forgiveness and restitution. The programme specification, like the course itself, begins with detailed reference to the story of Zacchaeus (Zak in the course materials) and states its basis in scriptural text whilst disclaiming any missionary purpose.

So Sycamore and SORI are two perceptibly different modes of discourse, depending upon the source of the narrative, both of which attract and involve chaplains. What, then, is the narrative of the chaplains who deliver or facilitate these programmes?

Colin, who facilitates SORI, put it succinctly when he said: "It is almost as if SORI were a way back from the periphery, a readmission to the whole purpose and culture of the prison and a newly re-minted identity." Maurice, on the other hand, appears less concerned with the identity of chaplaincy, more with the way it permeates the establishment: "the governor and the staff overall are very much behind Sycamore.....the previous governor allowed me the opportunity to give a presentation on Sycamore Tree restorative justice at a full staff meeting." Governors do not easily do this.

For Maurice, an obviously evangelical but also highly sacramental priest, restorative justice is not only about cognitive behavioural development, it is also and equally about what he calls emotional intelligence:

We give the young people a chance to look at who are their victims, what are the ripples in their offences, and to see their families as victims and indeed themselves as victims and that is very powerful. So that is part of the cognitive process as well, I believe.

The register of faith-based RJ seems so far entirely compatible with secular RJ programmes. Similarly, in the prison where Angus works, the Governor

recognised that *Sycamore* is one of the chaplains' components in the broader resettlement strategy:

The other one who has commented on *Sycamore Tree* is the number one Governor who attended the final session, and the following morning in the SMT meeting advised all members of the SMT to find out more about *Sycamore Tree* because it was so good, so powerful. So that was pleasing.

Angus, like Maurice, stresses the emotional charge of *Sycamore*; Crawley (2004, 130-131) has explored the ways in which prisons are already emotionally charged places. The last sentence, "So that was pleasing," implies that the Governor's approbation has been seen as a mark of inclusion, a sign that chaplaincy is reckoned to be inside the fold, in other words working in an institutionally compliant way. It would be possible to see this as compromise of the kind hinted at by Forrester and Taylor. For analytical purposes, however, the term convergence says more about the confluence of values which are avowedly - if not exclusively - theological, with a neo-paternalistic prison regime, as opposed to the earlier authoritarian regimes researched by Sykes and Cohen and Taylor.

If this is a feasible reading of a current development in carceral practice in England and Wales then it is both significant and surprising, because in most of the prisons I have visited the voluntary nature of participation is emphasized. (Scott 2010, 226-227; 2.3) So, for instance, Barbara says: "No-one can tell you that you have to do it; it has got to come out of your own heart. So no offender manager can say you have got to do SORI." (*Appendices 3 & 4*)

That seems to be a recognition that a modicum of power has been conceded by a regime which might earlier have overtly directed course participation. More than that, though, there is a small concession of institutional power to the chaplain because, in this case, there are prisoners that Barbara doesn't want, doesn't think are suitable for the programme: "It is not a silver bullet and there are people for whom that experience is profound but it doesn't last. It evaporates....it is not for everybody."

So the institution is willing to take the risk of going with the chaplain's assessment. This resonates distantly with the position held by some chaplains in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is certainly something of a similarly pioneering enthusiasm about the two groups so widely separated by time. Maurice says: "Sycamore is my passion.....if I had my way I would see Sycamore at every prison in the UK and every prisoner given the opportunity to meet a surrogate victim."

This implies a potential dialogue about state sponsorship of religions and faiths and the extent to which they are subsumed by an otherwise secular system. Or not: the RC church chose to secede from the prison chaplaincy structure on the grounds that, in the perception of the former Roman Catholic Principal Chaplain, the Prison Service wished to implement a generic Christian registration and ministry (*The Tablet* 19/11/2011, 12-13) whereas RC chaplains should minister only to Catholics, a principle originally made in a draft Concordat from the Catholic Bishops Conference in England and Wales.

ii A new start for chaplains?

RJ programmes, whilst focusing on the restoration of the victim and the offender, appear also to have a restorative, re-energizing effect on some chaplains. They seem almost to redefine the chaplain's role. Colin told me that:

SORI has been fantastic.... for me it has been the kind of saving grace..... I have been able to change my ministry and stay in the same prison ..... it has kept me sane because if I had done just coordinating work full time then I think I would have just been kind of bored with it and needing something else to get my teeth into.

Colin's words suggest his need for more variety and stimulation than "just coordinating". Since coordinating is the institutionally defined role, this implies dissatisfaction with its perceived limitations. Talking with Barbara, I sensed that SORI had not changed her ministry so much as given her space amongst her managerial functions to return to what she conceives she should be doing, the values with which she became a prison chaplain: "I also

jealously guard my commitment to SORI because that is what I came into the prison to do, which is to work with offenders.”

It is not only victims who can find a measure of restoration, not only prisoners who can find at least some of their dignity and self-worth restored; prison chaplains discover a new energy, a perspective shift, a restoration of purpose in being part of and identifying with a restorative ethos. This is ironic because the drive towards restorative practices forms part of Prison Service strategy yet helps some chaplains to rediscover their personal ministerial values.

My final observation about chaplains’ involvement with restorative practice is about finding a conceptual framework for a restorative ministry. I suggest that it might be shaped largely by a theory of drama and by what, for want of a less cumbersome phrase, I will term meta-liturgy: two different but related forms of ritual.

### iii RJ as ritualized engagement

Chaplains, like prison officers, are caught up in enacting the physical and linguistic rituals of prison according to rules which are formal and systemic on the one hand and informal and localized on the other (Crawley, 2004. 132 & 142). We then have to add prisoners’ role playing into the mix (Toch, 1992. 204-207) although Crewe prefers – albeit with reservation – to speak of typologies. Indeed, the whole criminal justice system is characterized by ritual, by drama (Crewe, 2009. 83). Sykes (1971, 18) noted that “the prison exists as a dramatic symbol of society’s desire to segregate the criminal, whatever reasons may lie behind that desire.”

So what has this got to do with restorative justice? Dignan et al (2007) have shown how RJ schemes can be drawn on to a theatrical template. Such an approach may be helpful in drawing attention to the fact that restorative justice encounters do not just happen, but have to be ‘staged’.

The tableau outlined by Dignan et al resembles the prison RJ tableau as I have observed it; this offers a protagonist, the victim, and an antagonist, the

offender. There is also, of course, a participant audience. In the case of STP a script can be detected since Q and A workbooks are an important component. My fieldwork notes comment on the element of theatre in the victim awareness session which I observed. Barbara catches the tension and the release in terms which briefly unite classical dramatic theory with a fundamental tenet of Christian theology:

I mean imagine, imagine that deep dark place that you have, that actually you want nobody to shine a light into, and we have all got them, ..... then you think of standing up in front of 40 people, strangers, and saying you know this is what I have done..... it is such a cathartic experience that it becomes.... it is like forgiveness.

What Barbara does is to take the dénouement, the end-of-drama situation and import it into a theological register. This prompts a different, theologically orientated view of RJ sessions. We have the suffering victim, the figure on the cross; we have the sinner who stands in need of forgiveness, who needs to hear the words of absolution. He or she makes their confession and a form of absolution may be forthcoming. Again the plot moves according to a pre-determined plan but now the STP workbooks can look like a loose catechism. I offered this theory to Maurice who agreed that, "it is almost like a catechism." Earlier in the interview Maurice had said:

So many elements of the liturgy .....connect directly with restorative justice. But I think for me the very heart of it is at the holy Eucharist itself with the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the wine, the body and blood of Christ.

The kernel of this is that some practitioners recognize in STP and SORI fresh forms, templates analogous to their more traditional and accustomed practice.

To sum up, RJ can be seen by chaplains as a convergence of their philosophy and praxis with those of the establishment. For some, it represents a new start almost as much as it can do for victims and offenders. Lastly, chaplains are able to engage with prisoners in implicitly ritualized ways which can be thought of as a kind of secular liturgy: "It needs in my opinion to be chaplaincy led; it needs rightfully to take place if possible in the chapel, but not in a religious chapel. I mean we get rid of the communion table...."

Colin's words seem to capture some of the uneasy and unresolved tension which underlies chaplains' active involvement in restorative programmes; is this a faith event which could also point towards religious conversion or is it a secular programme which happens to take place in the largest assembly space in the building and is facilitated by the custodians of that space?

Maurice's words, rooting RJ in eucharistic theology, seem to pull towards the first alternative whilst Colin's words lean towards the second, hinting at something which might be considered safe space over against sacred space. Even within the relatively small community of Anglican chaplains involved in restorative programmes there seems to exist a broad range of self perception. The element of uncertainty echoes Sykes:

Of all the tasks which the prison is called upon to perform, none is more ambiguous than the task of changing criminals into non-criminals. The goal itself is far from clear and even when agreement can be reached on this point...the means to achieve it remain uncertain. (1971, 17)

The uncertainty remains among chaplains forty years later.

#### **4.6 Issues arising from working with prisoners**

Chaplaincy can be seen as analogous to a commercial brand; several varieties are subsumed under the same name. This is true of ministry in prisons and in the COE. All chaplains' involvement in institutions is significantly influenced by the nature and protocols, both formal and informal, of each establishment. Anglican chaplains appear to be more plastic than others – owing partly to tradition and partly to extant legislation.

Like Janus, the Roman god of doors and boundaries, chaplains face both ways, towards the institution and towards the individual, towards both the past and the future. This is not news but the mechanisms may be; both Alexandra and Alf refer to reception visits as both pastoral and as a legal requirement which feeds data into the institutional data pool. Roger speaks of trying to dissuade men from absconding, primarily for their own sakes but also for the reputation of the prison.

Although only three respondents acknowledge it, the Anglican chaplain implicitly carries the weight and influence of the established church, even in Wales, headed by the monarch and represented by twenty six unelected bishops in the House of Lords. One of these is designated as bishop to prisons, with the Archbishop of Canterbury as the first office in national precedence after the monarch. The COE, then, should be well placed to influence penal policy and practice; in Rowan Williams it had an archbishop who wished to do so (Goddard 2013, 265-266). There is little evidence that the COE influences penal affairs to any significant extent; unlike the Methodist and RC churches and the Church of Scotland, it has no national statement about ministry in prisons and the extent of diocesan engagement with Anglican prison chaplains depends entirely upon local personalities and policy.

Anglican chaplains are reluctant to introduce faith talk into conversations but will respond when prisoners take the initiative. (4.3) Those few who are proactive in talking about belief seem predominantly to be the conservative evangelicals; they are the ones most likely to be personally involved in delivering Alpha courses and, especially, the Sycamore Tree programme. For these chaplains ministry appears to be activity and work based, which is consistent with HMPS programme based approaches to behaviour modification and rehabilitation; it also satisfies prisoners who are course attenders, certificate collectors or who seek non faith benefits (Burnside 2008, 3; Maruna et al 2006, 162). Not all conservative evangelicals work in this way – Gough for instance – but as a type of chaplaincy it stands out against the more ontological practice of liberal catholics.

So what type of ministry is this which is so diverse and not widely owned with any consistency by the COE, the CIW or indeed, by individual governors and area managers? Is it even possible to talk (Threlfall-Holmes & Newitt 2011,116-126) of a typology or of models when practice is so diverse? To adapt Geertz's terminology (Geertz 1973, 93), there is no model *for* Anglican chaplaincy, but there many models *of* Anglican chaplaincy. It might be

possible to speak of variant forms of ministry under the broad over-arching heading of Anglican prison chaplaincy.

A further question concerns the nature of what chaplains think they are doing when they interact with prisoners. Is this a generalised pastoral ministry or is it more focussed pastoral counselling? Most respondents suggest that it is the former, which most characterise as listening. (4.4) Is there any evidence of a pastoral theology underlying the practice? Ben suggests that “sometimes the religious side is unspoken but I suppose I bring into the equation, my sort of Benedictine roots.” A similar reticence infuses Adam’s reluctance to introduce matters of religious faith into a conversation unless the other person does. (4.3) Neither implies a disconnection between their version of theology and its practice, rather a conscious decision to separate them until a signal is given that religious reference would be acceptable. Adam reflects upon the obligations which may be unspoken but which underlie ordination and especially licensing to a prison,

I was licensed as the Church of England chaplain for [ ], in the chapel by one of the bishops of the diocese with the congregation there, and as a priest in ministry that is my context of ministry. When you accept a vocation to prison chaplaincy you know it is going to hurt and you don’t easily leave your flock of sheep, if you want to put it like that, the people that you have got a responsibility for.

He locates his ministry physically with reference to the chapel and ecclesially by drawing together all the parties to his licensing, the bishop as representative of the wider church and principal pastor, the prisoners and staff (the congregation), and himself. Adam is one of only three respondents who expressly identify prison chaplaincy as a vocation in itself (the others are Becky and Esther,) with attendant responsibilities and sufferings. Both he and Ben suggest that their ministry is undergirded by their theology rather than acting as a vehicle for it. Esther expresses something analogous in more domestic terms, “working in a prison is somewhere that did feel curiously like a sort of being at home.” Becky manifests a sharper sense of vocation: “I think that God has pulled me to this place. I am the right person for the job at this particular time; I feel that on a good day. On a bad day I

think, “Bloody hell, God, what am I doing here?” Her sense of vocation is balanced by feelings of isolation from other chaplains as well as other staff and implicitly the COE: “I don’t think that any of my colleagues here, even after 6 months, know how many children I have got or the names of my children. And I can’t bring issues from home into this place.” Those chaplains who appear to eschew pro-active mission can, nevertheless, articulate their sense of a deep rootedness either in institutional church norms (Adam) or personal faith (Becky) which informs their ministry even in perceived adversity.

#### **4.6.1 Chaplains’, prisons’ and prisoners’ time**

I have remarked above upon the intertwining of aspects of time and place in prisons. Time is a significant linguistic feature of prisons and prisoners. The expression “doing time” is used both by legal officials and offenders; a prisoners’ newspaper is titled *Inside Time*. A prison sentence can be referred to solely in terms of its length, as for instance, “he’s got a seven” for a seven year sentence or “He got life.” Ironically, some prisoners will speak of the time as if it were a gift; “The judge gave me six years,” although this may well not be how they regard it. Any prison sentence is therefore a direction concerning both place and time.

Wahidin (2004, 110) has drawn attention to two distinct though related aspects of time, chronology (*Chronos*) and cyclical time (*Kairos*), remarking that it is the former which predominates in European languages and in the context of consumer capitalism. Both can be thought characteristic of the prison situation. Wahidin (2004, 110) applies the notion of cyclical time especially to the progress and events of women prisoners’ lives or, as Cohen and Taylor (1974, 88) put it, “our past is not simply a pile of spent time, it has a personal meaning and significance.” For all long term prisoners anniversaries can be like seasonal markers, the date of the offence, a family death, a child’s birthday; there are few, if any, happy anniversaries in prison. Not infrequently they will be marked by time spent in chapel, linking cyclical time with a specific place. Foucault, writing about heterotopias (1986, 26),

describes prisons as places where time and space intersect, where space is linked to “slices of time”. It is true of the chapel as micro-space within prisons.

#### **4.6.2 The chaplain and institutional time**

Prisons can, then, be thought of as places where time is of prime importance and several modes of time operate simultaneously, a “plurality of times” (Bourdieu 2000, 224). It is the place where “time” is served. As institutions, prisons operate strictly according to Zerubavel’s definition of schedule, derived from the Benedictine monastic hours. The attendance of prison staff, including chaplains, is limited to the temporal boundaries defined by the establishment schedule (Zerubavel 1981, 15). This is based on a prioritised assessment (notionally agreed between management and unions) of the number and size of the tasks the establishment has to perform in the short, medium and long terms. The length of the prison day and its subdivisions are thus task-determined since each task is defined in terms of a block of time. The parallel is with sentencing since different offences are defined by minimum/maximum time ranges for the purpose of imprisonment. All tasks, therefore, have to be carried out within an allotted period which may be at odds with bio-time or the socio-temporal schedules of the world outside the prison. So, for example, prisoners will take all their meals within an eight or nine hour period, this being the segment of the day when most staff are in attendance. Since the staff must also have a mid-day break and the prison should not operate at less than the agreed level of staffing, many prisoners are locked into their cells for a period of ninety minutes or so, during which the prison is said to be “on patrol state” and no-one may be unlocked without specific authorisation.

The effect on chaplains is not only to divide their day into two distinct parts but to determine, as Alexandra says, which tasks can be performed at which times. The statutory duties and pastoral ministry must be conducted within two periods of approximately three hours each. During this time, however, prisoners not affected by the statutory duties may well be at work or in

education classes; if the chaplain wishes to see them she may well have to take time from one of these areas. On the other hand she may be required to attend a pre-scheduled meeting which reduces the period in which she can conduct her ministry and perform statutory tasks. Since the meetings schedule is usually pre-planned for twelve months, two cycles of temporal regularity may be said to be in conflict and potentially stress inducing. This may be expressed in terms such as, "I don't have the time," or "There simply isn't enough time." The chaplain is therefore constrained to operate within someone else's schedule in much the same way as prisoners. Becci (2010, 305) has observed that "waiting for someone else's permission to use one's own time means being subordinated. In prison time is totally mastered by the administration." Bourdieu (2000, 226) adds that, it "is a fundamental dimension of the social value of that person." Similarly, Cohen and Taylor (1974, 89) assert that time for prisoners, "is no longer a resource but a controller." The coercive effects of temporal regularity which Zerubavel (1981, 48) expounds thus affect the chaplain almost as much as the prisoners, whilst the power imbalance described by Bourdieu suggests the liminality of chaplains. In this I differ from Becci (2010, 305) who, writing of chaplaincy in eastern Germany, asserts that "chaplains have no serious temporal obstacles." She applies Bourdieu's observations to the staff/prisoner differential but seems to exclude chaplains from it on the basis that they can work with prisoners over a longer period. This to say that the statutory obligations and restrictions upon chaplains differ from one jurisdiction to another and that English/Welsh chaplains are more temporally and externally regulated than their German counterparts.

For many Anglican chaplains who are also co-ordinators, still the majority, decisions have to be made between "seeing prisoners" and "doing admin". This may involve a tension between preference and prescription or between conflicting perspectives of ministerial duty. The fact of having to make such a decision indicates that, with the exception of Sundays, the chaplain's work is not included in the establishment list of tasks to be performed. Alternatively, it may demonstrate that chaplains' tasks are not easily assessed in temporal

units. This may not be too far removed from the experience of other staff for, as Roth has observed (1963, 101): “The reference points and stages of a timetable do *not* necessarily describe what a person is actually doing at a given stage of the timetable, but serve only as symbols of such activity.” Not to feature in the schedule, then, is also symbolic of separateness and subordination.

If the annual schedule of meetings reflects the demands of a calendrical cycle it might be argued that some chaplains may have to deal with more than one calendar. Although the secular and Christian calendars broadly coincide, Anglican chaplains may find themselves entering the calendrical cycle of other faiths, especially if there is no chaplain of that faith in attendance. This implies not only knowledge of dates but also of entitlement to diet, dress and permitted artefacts: Beckford and Gilliat (1998, 85) have drawn attention to the possible limits upon facilitation of the prison regime and topography. Despite the developments noted by Gilliat-Ray (2008), it may therefore happen that co-ordinating Anglican chaplains will sometimes be perceived as restricting religious observance by other faiths. (HMPS issues an annual chart of festivals for the major religious traditions.)

#### **4.6.3 The chaplain and prisoners’ time**

(See also 4.5) There is a sequential rigidity of the progress through remand, trial, sentence, local prison to category C, and possibly to category D before release. The chaplain may encounter pastoral needs related to the stages in the sequence. (4.2.1) As Becky indicates, (4.5.1) the chaplain needs to appreciate the tensions and stresses induced by prisoners’ perceptions of time and have strategies for addressing them, e.g. life sentence, approaching death and the perception of time as loss (Goffman 1991,66). Her observations can be read in the context of Bourdieu’s assertion that, “possession of the minimum necessary number of assurances concerning the present and the future.... is what provides such agents with the dispositions needed to confront the future actively.” (Bourdieu 2000, 225) Different prisoners may perceive the same temporal period in different ways; as a

prison governor told me, “a month for a Detention Centre trainee was perceived as forever yet for a lifer [it] is hardly noticed.” A sentence of two months can induce near hysteria in a young mother in prison for the first time whereas a more experienced prisoner may accept it as an occupational hazard. Equally, responses to the same temporal period vary according to expectation. Yet there is a Durkheimian sense in which these different scales and modes of time coexist and are contained within the prison community: “The divisions into days, weeks, months, years and so on correspond to the recurring cycle of rituals, holidays and public ceremonies. A calendar expresses the rhythm of collective activity while ensuring its regularity.” (Durkheim 2001, 12)

#### **4.6.4 Public space and private place**

Linking issues of time and space Durkheim theorises that:

In order to arrange things spatially, we must be able to situate them differently..... just as to arrange things temporally it must be possible to situate them at definite dates..... space would not be what it is if it were not, like time, divided and differentiated. (2001, 13)

Becci (2010, 304) observes that, “The space in prison is scrupulously subdivided so as to allow the most efficient accomplishment of specific activities such as cells, courtyards..... and chaplaincy.” This is true in varying degrees of other institutional spaces; commercial/industrial analogies have been drawn by Melossi & Pavarini (1981, 143), Hancock & Jewkes (2011, 612) and Ruggiero (2012, 20), although Wacquant finds the position inadequate (2008, 30-31). Becci’s observation, however, reflects increasing research interest in carceral space. This transdisciplinary interest involves geographers, sociologists and theologians; Knott (2010, 31-33) helpfully proposes two broad areas of inquiry, “Poetics, place and the sacred” and “Politics, religion and the contestation of space”. Whilst the two are clearly linked, the distinction is useful for this research insofar as it helps to locate chaplains in relation to their “base” or presumed physical location.

In the poetics area Gilliat-Ray (2005a) traces the development from Anglican prison chapel through to more generic, neutrally labelled spaces such as

prayer room or multifaith room, but also, as her title suggests, links it with the politics of contestation. Her research at the Millennium Dome raises issues similar to prison spaces and, indeed, suggests a methodology in her use of fieldwork observation and analysis of prayer requests and recorded comments. In both pieces she refers to the body as active entity enacting private ritual within a politically contested space which also hosts more public ritual.

In prison chapels (and, it seems, to a lesser extent in multifaith areas,) prisoners bring their histories, aspirations and fears to a space where they are recognised and validated; I consider this in 8.3. In such cases the enabler and facilitator is a chaplain from a Christian tradition and, since in many cases the full time chaplain was, and is, Anglican, it is possible to postulate a latent sense of Anglican ownership analogous to that implied by Gilliat-Ray (2005a, 302). Unsurprisingly, I found almost none of this sense amongst Anglican chaplains, possibly because, with the exception of one prison, all had at least a world faith room; many had a mosque as well.

There were areas of contestation however concerning the “public” performance of ritual. Freddie recollected anger at his Director’s decision to allow secular arts activities in the faith space though he also said of Muslim use of the space, “of course, we wish they weren’t here.” By contrast, Angus spoke of harmonious joint use of the one faith space by all faiths, which involved the removal or veiling of religious symbols and artefacts. Angus later told me that the only objections had been raised by chaplaincy volunteers and visitors, echoing Shaw’s observation that, “fundamentalists often fail to realize the compromise of having to live in a multi-faith, multi-cultural setting.” (Shaw 1995, 85) Uniquely, Imogen, not the co-ordinating chaplain, had experienced conflict with the co-ordinator (a free church minister) over her wish to display a cross – as opposed to a picture of Jesus – in the chapel. These comments were made off-audio and are from my field notes. Additionally, a free church minister complained in a focus group about a perceived Anglican monopoly of the chapel on Sundays, apparently

unaware of the statutory obligation on the Anglican chaplain (6.2) and of the latitude which this allows.

Chaplains engage in a range of pastoral activities, both statutory, in which they approach prisoners, and responsive, in which they react to an approach. Respondents' narratives indicate that these activities are interpreted through the social, topological and historical features of each establishment, so that the lexis of such engagement, whilst appearing to be definitive - even legally so - is in practice fluid and personal, either to the individual chaplain or to the team if there are agreed modes of practice, such as I observed in Barbara's team. This underlines the absence of any code of occupational ethics for prison chaplains. A few dioceses give guidance on ministerial practice and one operates a reflective practitioner scheme but otherwise it appears that Anglican chaplains' habitus shapes and is shaped by the field in which they work.

## CHAPTER 5

### WORKING WITH OTHER PRISON STAFF

5.1	Working relations	114
5.2	Working with prison officers	117
5.3	Pastoral ministry to officers	123
5.4	Governors	126

#### 5.1 Working relations

In 3.2 I outline the way in which some chaplains use story as a means of reflecting upon and explaining their ministry. In this section I write about chaplains' storied interaction with prison officers and governors. One story told by Daniel has the three parties in engagement with each other; whilst this is a unique occurrence in my research, I give it prominence because it sets out in a single narrative how relationships can be played out, based upon perceived status, developed trust and informal social involvement. There are, of course, other narratives.

Daniel became involved in an extreme situation; he recounted to me in detail, still affected by the episode, how he had informed two staff of a family suicide based on misinformation from the police who had given the wrong name:

It was the worst thing I suppose I have ever had to do. It was two members of staff working here, one was a prison officer, a Senior Officer and they have both since left. But one day I got a phone call from the Principal Officer saying, "Get up to the Governor's office *now!*" I got up there and the Governor was saying that, "We have just had a message from the police that their son has been found hanging at home; the daughter has gone home from school and found him." So they wanted me to break the news and of course that was bad enough; the worst thing was that the police had got the, they had got two sons and the police gave us the wrong name. And so I told them that Samuel had..... what had happened and they were just in bits and then the news came through that it wasn't Samuel, it was Jake and I think that, although they wouldn't admit it, that Jake was the older and the favourite son and they have already been upset about Samuel and, you know, and then they were told it wasn't Samuel it was Jake, it was just dreadful. And all I could do was, you can't say anything; anything you

say really would be just words really in the immediate aftermath, you know when there is such a trauma. All you can do is sort of be in those circumstances. And so they went back to a neighbour's house because their house was still sealed off by the police and I went with them in the car and back to the house and another Principal Officer and he drove and they sat in the back and they were, they were sobbing, in bits one minute and the next minute they were laughing and joking, it was just the shock you know about memories of their son. And then got back to the neighbour's house and stayed as long as you felt was necessary but, yes, very hard. But the only way I could help, I suppose from a conservative evangelical point of view was that I did what anyone else would do, whether they were conservative evangelical or not, and supported them afterwards, kept visiting and kept inviting them up here just to chat and to talk but they themselves started to go, to attend the local church. They got support there from the local vicar but I suppose, you know, that you have got the promises that are in the Bible but that is not it, you know. Where else would they come from? You know, what else could....

The story is initially interesting for what it does not say. Why, for instance does the summons come from the PO and not from the Governor or his secretary? Is the PO's tone as peremptory as it seems or does it reflect a close working relationship where such direct speaking is understood? The second unknown is the reason why the Governor did not break the news to the parents himself. My own experience of comparable situations is that the Governor and the chaplain negotiate the procedure and are both present. It may be that he regarded the chaplain as the one who by tradition breaks bad news; or it may be (and the two are not mutually exclusive) that he regarded Daniel as "a safe pair of hands" and recognised that he was accepted by staff and socially engaged with them.

Daniel's involvement with the parents is complex, rendered more so by misinformation from the police. Since I have similarly given misinformation (to a prisoner), I understand how vulnerable the giver and the receiver become to each other. Daniel, however, is party to the emotional conflict at the point of realisation that it was, after all, the "favourite" son who had died. Even at this remove he prefers not to recall his actual words ("that Samuel had..... what had happened"). He becomes closely involved with the parents' actions and conflicting emotions and enters into their anguish. What is unclear or ambivalent is what Daniel's function is in this sequence since he

recognises that “you can’t say anything.... All you can do is sort of be in those circumstances.” His involvement is that of companion and sharer in a way that is not obviously related to faith or religion but may arise from his status as trusted colleague; he recognises that the need was for sympathetic, supportive presence and practicality rather than a bringing of a faith perspective to bear upon a deeply traumatic situation.

In a later narrative he recounts his involvement with the suicide and subsequent funeral of a staff member and reflects: “I think that as a chaplain if there is anything that injures you it is not the threat of violence from prisoners because that is very rarely if ever there, it is issues like that, to deal with that. It’s tough.” This depth and intensity of involvement might not have been possible if Daniel were not also socially involved with “staff members here that I play golf with, you know, or go out on a pub trip with and so you learn to relate in a ..... (*laughs*), you are not surprised.” As far as I can tell there is no conflict between Daniel’s ministry to staff and to prisoners; I was reminded of Ben’s comment that, “those two actually don’t very often come into conflict.” I cannot say how significant the qualifier “very often” might be, but there is potential for role strain.

Tilt (2011, 15) writes about chaplains’ ministry to officers following a prisoner’s self-inflicted death, linking it to the “cure of souls” charge in the bishop’s licence, “the prison is the chaplain’s parish” (8.1). Importantly, her interview data indicate that chaplains are able to give care and renew hope in the absence of management support.

Chaplains’ principal engagement with other staff is with prison officers. This is not unexpected since both interact with prisoners on wings and landings; they are therefore perhaps more frequently visible to each other than other agencies. Penny recalls her active involvement, “I had nothing to do with the senior management team when I was a sessional chaplain. It was always the staff on the ground; it was the nurses, the officers, the OSGs (Operational Support Grades).” A focus group member reflected that:

As chaplains we see staff as they really are because they don't put a face on for us. Governors don't see that. Governors only see the best side. If a governor walks into a wing office, everybody is on best behaviour; if a chaplain walks in everybody carries on as normal. That is a privilege as it shows we are accepted.

Other respondents, though, suggest that such privileged insight does not always confer "acceptance". The extract also hints at a potential source of tension between chaplains and governors. The following two sections recount and analyse relations with officers and governors.

## **5.2 Working with prison officers**

Twelve respondents spoke about their pastoral responsibility for and ministry to prison officers. Few, though, spoke about day to day working arrangements and relations with officers. Five respondents spoke about their relations with governor grades; of these, two responses indicated uneasy, even hostile, relations (5.4). Only one respondent commented upon any other professional grade in his prison; when asked if psychologists were employed there, Colin replied, "No, gloriously no!" Otherwise I have no empirical basis for assessing relations between chaplains and other specialists. Since chaplains have a statutory duty to visit prisoners in the healthcare centre (in those prisons where there is one) it is surprising that there is no reference to working alongside medical staff.

Todd and Tipton (2011, 25-32) reflect upon "the prison chaplain – prison officer continuum" and the perception of differentiated functions in relation to working with prisoners, based on data drawn from officers, prisoners and governors. The discussion is prisoner focussed and does not, therefore, encompass comment upon interaction between the grades. The authors rightly query the perception of chaplain neutrality. It becomes clear from my data, however, that chaplains are enmeshed with officers more than either perhaps realise though this is not to suggest any element of collusion. Nevertheless, it might be thought to inhibit the exercise of a prophetic or whistle blowing ministry. Atherton (1987, 79-80), writing from the perspective of a RC chaplain and hence not statutorily bound into the prison system, argues that chaplains can, by virtue of being embedded in the prison

system and its processes, exercise a prophetic ministry in the OT sense of reminding prison authorities that “there is a spiritual dimension in human beings that it is dangerous to ignore, that institutions like individuals, must be guided by moral considerations.” Forrester (2000, 86) implicitly contests Atherton’s thesis of the moral authority of the embedded chaplain and observes that chaplains are employees of the state, embedded in the prison system – as are most prison officers – and that their scope for whistle blowing is thereby constrained. It is not clear how far, if at all, chaplains can or even should exercise such a prophetic function given the existence of the Prisons Inspectorate and the Independent Monitoring Board. A useful parallel can be found in the annual reports of the Chaplain General to the Irish Prison Service: following a sharply critical report in 2008, the 2010 report indicated that the situation had deteriorated and that the strictures of the chaplains had had no apparent influence.

The system cannot continue to minimize the grave concerns that have been consistently highlighted in numerous reports from the Council of Europe CPT, the Prison Inspectorate, and indeed our own reports down through the years. We cannot ignore the reality we witness every day of a system that is in crisis. (Irish Prison Chaplains Annual Report 2010, 3)

The Irish report suggests that speaking the truth to power is only a plausible concept when power is ready to listen and contemplate the possibility of responsive action.

A question therefore remains about the extent to which chaplains can act as whistle blowers or “conscience of the establishment” if they are or are perceived to be too close to other prison staff.

It is clear that chaplains see themselves as offering pastoral ministry to staff as well as to prisoners and, despite the comments mentioned above, this ministry is offered to governor grades. Possibly because of a high level of mutual visibility, most chaplains show a measure of empathic insight into what they identify as the stresses and frustrations of the prison officers’ role. In contrast Pauline identifies a cynicism which tainted her working relationships:

I found it quite difficult to relate to staff in the first couple of years that I was here: there was a fairly negative mind-set in this prison or at least that's how I perceived it. I found it difficult to tolerate a cynical and dismissive attitude towards prisoners and myself.

Although Pauline eventually achieved more effective working practice with officers, her pastoral engagement with them had not developed in ways that other chaplains experience:

I can't say that I spend a lot of time with staff and that is still an area that I need to work on, but I have a good working relationship with them. I would really like to have been on the Care Team but that didn't happen for one reason or another.

That there was lingering mutual mistrust is suggested by Pauline's omission from the Staff Care and Welfare team, membership of which is almost a *sine qua non* for chaplains. The impression is of an amicable but instrumental working arrangement.

Tom also identifies negative attitudes amongst officers although in this instance the cynicism seems to come from the chaplain himself:

The officers will very often sit in their office all day long and not do anything because they know exactly what is going to happen..... and I think that from your observations this morning they looked quite settled sitting in their offices, you know, getting on with their usual tick boxes and I'm sure that once they have done that they sit and gossip all day.

While Tom's cynicism ("tick boxes") seems to be mixed with a measure of resentment, he nevertheless identifies the tedium and repetitiveness ("know exactly...") of an officer's job in a long stay prison and his insight seems to be confirmed when he says, "That is the job and I think that a lot of the prison officers have become so complacent, so settled."

Alexandra senses a wariness of chaplains by officers: "I do think that there are quite a lot of staff suspicions still to chaplaincy as to what we might do." This may arise from the dismissal of a previous chaplain in that prison. There is evidence to suggest that chaplains are held to account for their behaviour more than other staff might be. This became a problem for Imogen: "Unfortunately we had a female chaplain here who had a relationship with

one of the inmates and that comes up as well.” She suggests that her working relations with staff are partly framed by their perception of her predecessor and judgements made on that basis. I analyse Imogen’s data in more detail in 7.3, but both she and Alexandra indicate the importance of relationality in working with prison officers and are able to locate development points in working relations.

Ben is also specific about ways of developing and maintaining effective working practice:

If somebody is late arriving I will ring the wing and say, “Can we have so and so up? Is there a problem? Do you want me to come and collect them?” In other words I try and meet the staff half way because the uniformed staff are really on the front line.

On the basis of these data Ben (who is related to a prison officer) has a significantly more active view of officers’ role (“on the front line”) so that his co-operative style is informed by a pastoral perspective as well as a concern for the efficient working of the prison.

Esther recounts that in her early weeks of chaplaincy she was grateful to learn from officers:

Green does not begin to describe how I was; I really knew nothing about anything practically. And the staff were brilliant, they sort of looked after me, and they were saying things like, “Would you like us to do x?” which was code for, “Normally we would do this.” The sensible person says, “Yes,” and so I did.

Esther relates how she and an officer worked together to help a severely distressed prisoner (7.4). It is clear from that account, as from Ben’s thoughts above, that chaplains and officers are capable of mutual respect and productive co-operation. It is not clear how far this arises from working process, from relationality or a balance between the two.

Iain, a regional chaplain, raises the importance of relational factors, especially, as he sees it, the ability to engage in the banter of officers, “I have a level of banter and fun I like with staff and prisoners.” He clearly enjoyed the form of discipline exercised by an officer during a chapel service:

Someone was misbehaving, playing up, one of the juveniles, and he said, "Look, do you know what the Bible says about that sort of behaviour in church?" He says, "No, what does it say?" And he says, "And Jesus said, 'If thou takest the piss then thy arse shall be kicked.' "What? Where does it say that?" "First Hepatitis chapter 3.2" "Oh." That level of humour!

Iain, as an observer, attaches serious significance to chaplains' involvement with officer humour:

I was walking with one chaplain from the gate to the chaplaincy at another prison and he didn't speak to one prison officer on the way .....What was even more worrying was that no one took the piss. You know he didn't introduce me and I thought that, you know, there is no banter here.

He senses that the relationship may be dysfunctional since no words are exchanged; the lack of banter reinforces the appearance of distance or coolness. It is easy, though, to imagine how the dynamic might change in a differently gendered situation where banter could be perceived as abuse. The relationship observed by Iain had apparently become fractured but it is also possible for chaplain/officer relations to appear to be too close. Ben remarks that,

The staff know that I will always back them up; I think that you have got to be able to maintain some sort of discipline and integrity within a place like this. The prisoners know that we will do the very best we possibly can for them and those two actually don't very often come into conflict. And if I think that somebody has been treated unfairly by a member of staff I will actually go quietly and say, "Look, I think that we might have a problem here, what is your perception of this?"

What initially sounds like uncompromising partiality ("I will always back them up...") turns out to be based on a concern for reconciliation and respect for officers' dignity and duties while maintaining the institutional power relationship. By contrast, Jeanette acknowledges a pastoral ministry to staff but is adamant that this does not mean unconditional support for their actions: "Yes, we are there for the staff as well. What I don't subscribe to is, erm, the staff are always right." She does not, though, say how disapproval or censure might be communicated or whether that might be a possible response. Becky simply observes, "I'm not on anybody's side."

During the course of one visit I came to feel that the chaplain had taken the side of officers in an issue of prisoner mistreatment (3.1.7); the details, however, are specific to one prison which it would be easy to identify, thus compromising confidentiality. Instead, I refer to an instance in my own experience when I was sure that a prisoner had been mistreated by one officer in a manner contrary to Control and Restraint techniques while being removed to the segregation unit. (As part of a C & R training exercise in removal practice I had been in the prisoner situation and therefore knew something about what constituted legitimate force.) When the prisoner had been locked into his cell I took the “Seg” Senior Officer to one side and told him of my concern. He gave me a direct look and said, “I’ve already had a word with him about it. I’ll be seeing him again to remind him of correct procedure.” In this case I knew the SO quite well and was able to use the relationship to raise an issue of human rights and decency in a way that did not arouse cultural opposition. I might have been less able to express my concern to a less amenable officer. As in Daniel’s story at the beginning of this section, easy social interaction facilitated what would otherwise have been a more formal and less immediate process. The chaplain at the beginning of this paragraph had, for reasons of their own, not questioned a situation which later surfaced in the regional media. Both Adam and Robin (4.1) imply the difficulty of acknowledging malpractice.

The possible consequences of challenging institutional practice were seen in the case of the Revd Peter Tullett, reported in *The Times* (22.10.01), who complained of officers’ alleged brutality against teenage prisoners in the segregation unit at Portland YOI. At first, he says, “I gradually learnt to accept it,” but following the encomium of the Director General at a chaplains’ conference in 1999 not to “look the other way” Tullett made his allegations more publicly. He is reported as having been advised to leave the establishment “for his own safety” and subsequently suffered a breakdown, leading eventually to his resignation. There are other versions of this narrative which tell the story differently, although there is no departure from the core fact that Tullett challenged local practice and culture and suffered

for it both financially and physically. I did not interview him and all references are to the press article.

### **5.3 Pastoral ministry to officers**

George suggests that the context and, by implication, the nature of a pastoral ministry to staff has changed as officers' quarters have been sold and staff's homes are more widely dispersed.

Prisons don't seem to exist as communities as they did years ago.....now staff come and go and you barely know they have come and gone. ....And the sense of community and the sense of chaplains being involved in the changing cycles of the prison and the prison staff are rather, rather less because staff don't do things together in the way that they did years ago. They don't live around prisons any more because all those houses have been sold off, .....So that community and the rituals that go with it have gone, and therefore chaplaincy don't get caught up in it.

George, a chaplain for many years, recognises that changing managerial priorities have been associated with the sale of publicly owned housing and the disappearance of a prison staff "community". The effect on chaplaincy, he seems to imply, is that any pastoral contact with staff is at need or upon request rather than endogenous. On the page his words appear almost nostalgic though this is not how they sound on tape. Nevertheless, he maintains that one connection remains:

That really doesn't affect anyone other than Christian chaplaincy because the Christian chaplains are the only people who relate culturally to the majority of the staff; where you get the Muslim chaplain he is not going to go and have a drink at the bar with the PO who is going, leaving the following week..... it is really a big divide.

George's words suggest that chaplaincy had engaged with a pervasive, male social culture rather than a religious one but that religious considerations stand in the way of Christian models of pastoral ministry being replicated by other faiths.

Becky, an experienced chaplain six months into a new post, articulates a sense of isolation from other staff, who are drawn exclusively from the local, rather isolated area.

The staff, you know, begin to trust you .... and that makes a huge difference to feeling settled. So I am sure in time some of the painful things that I feel at the moment just won't be such major issues. I am very fascinated by the culture and the dynamic here.

Her comments might reflect the pains of joining any established staff group but they suggest a degree of initial impermeability; trust has to be worked for and she finds it an enervating addition to her ministry. It may be that her sense of exclusion reflects something of the male culture implied by George.

The perception of a closed staff group does not, though, necessarily imply a developed staff community. The perspective of another chaplain, Penny, is almost the opposite of George's insofar that she acknowledges the existence of what she can identify as "community".

I have sensed a community amongst staff.... which I've sometimes felt fully engaged with and sometimes I've felt on the edge of and in the smaller prisons in which I've worked I've felt part of the community of staff.....It was a huge sprawling place and it was very difficult to get to know people and I didn't really feel part of the staff community. The last one I worked in, the open prison, you were very much part of the community; there wasn't a huge staff group..... I've felt like I've been a chaplain to the staff in all kinds of different situations, in joy, bereavement, illness or marriage break-up, which is the most common, or childbirth or disciplinary action.

Her remarks are a reminder that some institutions, not only prisons, are more difficult to permeate than others. Her working concept of "community" may differ from George's, which it appears to contradict, but, like Becky, she identifies some of the obstacles which can inhibit or prevent the ministry to staff acknowledged by chaplains. In fact, her comments ultimately complement George's implication in recognising that pastoral ministry to prison staff is endogenous and cannot simply be applied externally. She does not, however, elaborate upon what her engagement with "a community amongst staff" means in specific terms.

I have already suggested a perceptible distance between Pauline and the staff body. This seems to be mirrored in her lack of pastoral involvement with them: "I don't always find out what's going on in the lives of the staff and I

don't unfortunately have the time to dedicate to getting alongside staff in that sort of a way."

Many chaplains become involved with pastoral issues on a wide spectrum of intensity from the apparently ordinary to the most demanding and traumatic. Two narratives in particular, Ben's and Daniel's, concerned chaplains' ministry to officers who had experienced the suicide of a child. (5.1) Ben told me, "In fact I actually took the funeral, so yes there was a religious input; they are not deeply religious people but actually they wanted some faith structure around them." Of another officer Ben said,

We had another one who came up the next week and said that, "My son committed suicide 10 years ago," and I see this particular officer very regularly because clearly there are so many unresolved issues and they just feel they can unload and I think that is important.

Ben here is acting more as counsellor or listener than as priest: "I opened the door for it by being there and then took my cues from her. If I had gone in saying, "Let me say a prayer," I think that this person would have run a mile." This comment relates to a third case (the death of a parent) but illustrates Ben's belief that an overtly religious response or approach may deter staff from talking.

On every visit except two, to see Freddie and Adam, I was able to observe, albeit briefly, respondents interacting both with staff and prisoners. In two other instances I was aware that relations with some staff were strained or non-existent. Firstly, Dennis was met with barely disguised hostility in the segregation unit at HMP Grimley (not because of my presence since I was ignored, rather as an exercise in aggressive gate-keeping) although I observed him interacting amicably with officers and nurses elsewhere in the prison. Secondly, Ronald's presence in a wing office was entirely ignored by the two staff at their desks until I, embarrassed on his behalf, stepped out of the observer role with a brisk "Good morning," and was rewarded with a surprised and courteous "Good morning, sir. Can I help you?" as if I were the chaplain. Ronald had joined the establishment six months earlier and clearly had yet to establish his identity in this large local prison which serves several

functions and draws staff from different conurbations over a wide area. In such a diffuse and transitory environment of control and direction Ronald's diffidence did not seem conducive to the building of effective working, let alone pastoral, relations.

#### **5.4 Governors**

Although working relations with governor grades seem the most likely to come under strain, some chaplains are able to exercise a pastoral ministry in this area. Esther recognises that the governing governor can be in a uniquely isolated situation,

I'm like a kind of a sump, if people want to tell me stuff then they do. The previous governor when his marriage fell apart, I mean he shared quite a lot; particularly when you are a governing governor it is hard..... because you are on your own. It's not as though you have got sort of fellow governing governors on your doorstep, you are the one in charge.

Similarly, Ben observes that "I am also one of the few people the Governor can talk with confidentially." In these instances pastoral ministry is the provision of an open ear and a closed mouth with no necessary expectation of wisdom or even comment.

In contrast, both Pauline and Henry speak of differences with their line managers which led to disciplinary action being taken against them. Pauline speaks of subsequent adverse performance review which she was able to overturn but, "It was not an easy time and you can collapse under it sometimes and it did get to my health. So I was off with stress for a little while.... I came out from underneath the hatchet about four years ago I think."

She emphasizes a need for strength and adaptability in working with governors: "You have to be able to manage, to live within the system and you have to be able to hold your own with management."

Henry, who would only whisper parts of his narrative, feels that he and chaplaincy obligations were side-lined, "And that was dealt with mercilessly and it is 18 months ago now and.....was conducted by the governor ....and you know I was just, I just felt rubbished by that." Henry elaborated at

greater length about the difficulties he perceives in working with governors who are (necessarily) target driven.

Prisons are competing with each other, at least that is the attitude, you know, weighted score cards, everything improve, best function, highest functioning prison and, you know, the product is prisoners and that is zilch, you know, that is the way to glory of a governor rather than the well-being of staff and prisoners.

Henry's perceptions appear to support the thesis of Feeley and Simon (1992, 450), Jacobs (1977, 87-88) and Wacquant (2009, 17), all of whom stress centralization and financial imperatives.

A number of respondents remarked off the record that most governors seem not to understand chaplaincy or see the point of it. Claudia told me that she thanked the kitchen workers every Christmas Day "because the Governor is too bloody stupid to do it."

There are, of course, tensions and animosities between those who manage and those who are managed in all institutions. The relationship between prison chaplains and governors is ambivalent in that the location of the chaplain within the overall staff structure varies from one prison to another and, since 2012, is determined more specifically by pay grade than by patronage. There are still chaplains who remember that "the" chaplain was a senior member of staff, second only to the governing governor, a position maintained in the 1952 Prisons Act. A focus group member seems to suggest that increasing secularisation has been instrumental in pushing chaplains and chaplaincy to the periphery:

It is not as valued as it was and the significance is not seen is it, because the people that we work with haven't got any kind of spiritual.... we are finding we have had all these senior managers and where before at least they had at least a respect for religion now it is that they are younger..... they don't understand any kind of spirituality.....it is just irrelevant.

Despite scepticism about the role and attitude of governors by those with difficult experiences, such views are not predominant.

The functions of all prison staff, including chaplains, are centrally determined in generic terms; indeed, Anglican prison chaplains are the only clergy in the country whose duties are determined by act of parliament. But the working out of chaplaincy in practice is locally determined. My data suggest that relationality issues are a significant factor in determining how ministry is perceived and how it is delivered.

In the next chapter I consider liturgy and ritual as types of relationality.

## CHAPTER 6

### **“THE SLOW BALLET OF THE LITURGY”. RITUALS AND PARARITUALS: SECULAR AND SACRED.**

6.1	Prison pararitual	130
6.2	Chaplains as participants in pararitual: the reception process.	133
6.3	“You are what you eat.” From body of Christ to hymn sandwich.	136
6.4	“A divine pickling agent”	148
6.5	Eucharist as prison ritual	150
6.6	“The pastoral end of liturgy”: candle lighting	151
6.6.1	Candle lighting: interview responses	152
6.6.2	Reclamation of selfhood: candle lighting as a subversive pararitual	154
6.6.3	Candle lighting: email responses	156

Over half of the respondents mentioned liturgy as being in some way central to their ministry. They speak of it both as artefact and process. As artefact it is central to the Anglican experience and tradition although in many instances it provides a basis for adaptation and innovation for, and sometimes by, the participants. This is both artefactual and processual but further processual features include the act of gathering around the table, touch and perceived transformative potential. For the prison chaplain, liturgy is precisely located within a physical space, the prison, and may be associated even more closely with the prison chapel or worship space. The reverse association of chapel with liturgy is possibly tighter. Prison, however, is also a conceptual space where repeated actions and operations may be thought of as rituals or, more helpfully, as “ritual-like activities” (Bell 1997, 138-159). These I shall term pararituals while continuing to acknowledge Bell’s categories of formalism, traditionalism, disciplined

invariance, rule governance, sacral symbolism and performance. Bell (1997, 138) warns that these categories are neither exclusive nor definitive: they can therefore provide a loose framework within which to discuss significant, repeated actions, both secular and religious, in the prison setting. I argue that the actions and activities of chaplains, especially Anglicans, interlock with this repertoire of “ritual-like activities” or pararituals in ways which are both confluent and apparently contradictory. I shall examine responses to two specific areas of liturgy, the highly formalised Eucharist and the more fluid practice of candle lighting. The epistemological context for my analysis is shaped by Goffman, Turner, Bell and Foucault.

This section, then, explores the consistencies and inconsistencies which emerge from a comparison of what might be termed secular and sacred ritual and ritual-like activities. My position is that the chaplain is an agent of the institution by being a statutory part of its structure and processes which tend towards uniformity and suppression of individuality. At the same time chaplains can be seen as a kind of counter agent through their involvement with religiously derived ritual activities which stress individuality and personhood. This position needs to be distinguished from the situation of Swiss chaplains, who,

.....tient notamment à deux caractéristiques propres à leur statut: d’une part ils sont soumis au secret de fonction et au secret professionnel, d’autres part leurs rencontres avec les détenus ne font pas l’objet d’évaluations ou de rapports transmis à l’administration carcérale. (Becci, Bovay et al 2011, 4) (.....cling especially to two features of their status. On one hand they are subject to institutional practice and codes; on the other hand, no assessment or information deriving from their conversations with prisoners are shared with the prison administration.) (My translation.)

These chaplains face both institution and prisoner but, unlike their English and Welsh counterparts, have no formal input into the administrative data pool.

## **6.1 Prison pararitual**

In seeking to show how chaplains and their activities interlock with the secular operations of the prison I shall look first not at the chapel or religious

activities but at one of the repeated actions of the prison. There is a wide field of choice from repetition of recognised practices such as submitting applications as a way of making requests, to the highly ritualised (by words and actions) techniques of control and restraint. Within this range occur forms of address as indicators of power differentials and “kit change” where the issuing of institutional underwear (though not in women’s prisons) can be seen as reinforcing dependence and uniformity. (Clemmer 1958, 299)

I shall, like Bradshaw et al (1972), focus on reception procedures because chaplains have a statutory duty to engage in the reception process and since both prisons and churches use some rite of initiation. Even if their implementation in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century makes Goffman’s “rite of mortification” (1961, 24) or Garfinkel’s “rite of degradation” (1956, 420) somewhat too severe, the processes still represent an act of deprivation which Clemmer would have recognised as the first step of prisonization, both formal and informal:

Every man who enters the penitentiary undergoes prisonization to some extent. The first and most obvious integrative step concerns his status. He becomes at once an anonymous figure in a subordinate group. A number replaces a name. He wears the clothes of the other members of the subordinate group. (Clemmer 1958, 299)

The Prison Service procedure for reception is contained in PSI 74/2011 and indicates a shift away from extreme depersonalization. Hence, §1.6 reads “decency and equality must be treated as high priority issues at all times,” and §1.7 reads:

Induction consists of two modules; one that provides an introduction to custody for new prisoners only, and a second on preparation for life in the specific establishment for all. This avoids repetition while focussing on individual needs.

There is implied duality in that the same section speaks of individual needs but in the context of adjusting people to the system. §1.9 indicates the involvement of Chaplaincy in this sequence of actions but fails to indicate it as a statutory requirement. The pararitual nature of the reception procedure, with its significant actions and words, emerges in a local document which interprets PSI 74/2011 for staff at HMP Whitchurch (my emphases):

- *Collect* the wand from the shadow board in reception
- *Escort* the prisoner into reception search area
- *Ask* the prisoner to remove any jacket/coat
- *Ask* if they have anything in their pockets and if they have any unauthorised article on them
- *Ask* the prisoner if they have a pacemaker or any heart problems
- If there are no issues, commence initial *search* with wand
- Next commence a level A rub down *search* (see LSS)
- *Ensure* a S.I.R. (Security Information Report) is completed if any unauthorised item is found.

A full search includes the use of a BOSS (Bodily Orifice Scan and Security) chair; invasive manual searching no longer takes place. “Boss” is, however, the form of address still used by many male prisoners to officers while S.I.R, which stands for Security Information Report, echoes the form of address still used between older male staff. Similar protocols to the above, detailing sequences of words and actions, are in place for other aspects of the reception procedure including the collection of personal property and, in higher category prisons and local prisons, the issuing of institutional clothing.

While the reception process, conducted in a dedicated area, has pararitual qualities, the staff with whom I discussed it informally (field notes) were clear that the process had practical purpose for the institution and was intended to help and reassure prisoners. This task oriented practicality does not necessarily detract from the ritual-like appearance of the process: Bell observes:

For participants, the most common reasons given for joining in a ritual activity tend to be answers such as ‘we have always done this,’ ‘it’s our tradition’ or ‘we do it because it makes such and such positive things happen.’ (Bell 1997, 167)

Applied to prison receptions, the “positive things” can be construed in terms of institutional gain, a well ordered prison where power relationships are not overtly or extensively challenged and the legitimacy of processes is broadly accepted. As well as its formal and rule directed features the reception

process has a historical dimension dating back to practice at Gloucester in 1784 when head shaving and medical examination were introduced to improve hygiene and prevent the spread of disease. Ignatieff (1978, 101) observes that these rituals “had a latent but explicit purpose of humiliation.” He notes that this depersonalization reminded the subject of the state’s power to control identity. While details of reception procedures and the significance formally attached to them have developed, the inherited pararitual template remains (Crewe 2009, 83). Lynch (2002, 54) remarks upon the irony of entry “mortification” as a means of encouraging compliance in institutions which, like prisons, espouse quality of care in a mission statement.

## **6.2 Chaplains as participants in pararitual: the reception process**

Chaplains statutorily contribute to the sequence of reception activities, a major commitment in local prisons, and are thus embedded in the secular reception ritual and its institutional aims which their presence might be thought to legitimate. The chaplain’s place in the procedure varies both structurally and culturally from one establishment to another depending upon its status and the extent to which the chaplain embraces the system and is embraced by it. This disparity emerged in my fieldwork. Alexandra, chaplain in a busy local prison, observed about seeing new receptions:

The thing about rituals in prison is that the system works how it works and how it has always worked, you know, and the officers want to do their thing. So chaplaincy has to try and fit round that, so to try and change anything that is you know, to try and do something different I think it is quite hard. And for something like receptions you have to recognise the numbers that can be coming in. I mean, at the moment we haven’t had so many but we have had one morning a few weeks ago where we had 26 new people. Well actually, realistically, you are only going to be able to say, “Hello,” and talk to them briefly but when we see them we give them our leaflet, check that they are alright, check that their relatives know that they are here and record all that, you know we record who we have seen.

Alexandra unwittingly touches upon a number of Bell’s (1997, 145 & 150) characteristics of ritual-like activities especially traditionalism and invariance (“the system works how it works and how it has always worked”).

It might also be thought that this has the appearance of a power ritual in which the chaplain has to acquiesce in a way not dissimilar to prisoners, (“chaplaincy has to try and fit round that”). While Alexandra is part of the process she presents herself as a junior participant. Like the searching procedure, her involvement consists of broadly predictable words (asking) and actions (giving and recording.) While searching has to proceed without curtailment, it seems that chaplaincy pararitual has to be performed in the interstices of the larger process.

Alf is also chaplain in a busy local prison but, in contrast to Alexandra, he and his team are incorporated into the reception process and resourced as data gatherers and providers. He spoke of spending half an hour with each prisoner and asking questions according to a comprehensive scheme:

A piece of paper here with lots of questions, restoring them through finding out and taking their life story very seriously, and you go through that with a prisoner and you will find out ten times more stuff than we ever used to because you really are in the grubby minutiae of their life straight away and it is amazing how accommodating they are to let us in. I always thank them afterwards for being so courteous to me.

These data, including “the grubby minutiae”, are collected on behalf of a number of other departments and fed into the central database. His prison has a high number of new receptions, 100 per week on average though Alf instanced a day when there had been 40 whom he had to interview himself. Interviews are normally reckoned to last for half an hour; ordinarily they would be shared out between the three or four chaplains on duty on any given weekday, not only the Anglicans. Clearly, when the numbers are high a single chaplain cannot give each new arrival the in-depth attention which Alf speaks about and values as part of his ministry (“restoring them...taking their life story very seriously”). His involvement is not simply bureaucratic. He led the introduction of this scheme in response to the offer of European Social Fund support; it is an extension of a process which had already developed beyond basic data gathering into an attempt to assess the likelihood of self-harm or attempted suicide. As pressure from numbers increases the process becomes more an exercise in data gathering and less easily distinguishable

from other reception procedures other than the thanks for the subjects' courtesy in responding. Conceptually, then, Anglican chaplains are implicated in the developed shape and enactment of reception pararitual which can be seen both as concern for the welfare of the new arrival and as an integrative process.

In this microcosmic sense, therefore, the chaplain is inescapably a participant in the set of pararituals attendant upon entry to prison, in the phase of transition from outside to inside, from *societas* to *communitas*, so that the reception process and the site(s) in which it is enacted may be thought of as liminal space. There is, however, a plausible macrocosmic application of Turner's (and van Gennep's) theory of liminality (Turner 1969, 95), which is that it is the prison itself, as an entity within the larger criminal justice system, which is the liminal space, an extended liminality from which the subject will be released, transformed or not, and to which entry may be repeated on an indeterminate number of occasions. In this case, it is helpful to use Turner's own term "normative communitas" where:

Under the influence of time, the need to mobilize and organize resources, and the necessity for social control among the members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existential communitas is organized into a perduring social system. (1969, 132)

Todd and Tipton (2011, 33) and Todd (2013, 147) present arguments against the plausibility of chaplain neutrality ("a powerful and enduring myth"), as perceived by a majority of their respondents. Their argument is based on institutional affiliation and its shared security imperative. While accepting their analysis I suggest that the formal and historical embedding of the chaplain – especially the Anglican chaplain – in prison pararitual can militate more strongly against total neutrality than the simple facts of paid employee status and institutional dress code. Like them, however, I suggest that chaplains can be seen as counter cultural agents insofar that they respond to individuality over against the institution's thrust towards conformity. My data, however, although similarly derived from respondents, are more obviously grounded in dialogue and narrative. I have already referred to two respondents' contrasting data as examples of Anglican chaplains' engagement

with secular paratitular in pursuance of the aims of the institution and in conformity with its broader repertoire of ritual-like activities. When chaplains speak of ritual or liturgy they are almost always referring to a phenomenon arising from faith practice. This can mask the statutory status of the secular activity and the proportion of chaplains' time which it can occupy in local prisons. Indeed, statutory duties are a more influential determinant of the nature and pattern of ministry in local prisons since most longer stay prisons experience fewer receptions and do not have bedded healthcare centres. This may represent a major difference between ministry in the different categories of prison and remains an area for further research.

It is not, however, only the secular ritual which has statutory force. Anglican chaplains are required by the 1952 Prisons Act and its predecessors to conduct "divine service" every Sunday. Prison Rules 1999 (amended 2000) restates the requirement:

The chaplain shall conduct Divine Service for prisoners belonging to the Church of England at least once every Sunday, Christmas Day and Good Friday, and such celebrations of Holy Communion and weekday services as may be arranged. (§16 (1))

Anglican prison chaplains are the only clerics in the United Kingdom whose duties are legally prescribed; the secular/religious duality of their role is thus embedded in law and sustained in current Prison Rules. This makes a total, binary distinction between engagement with secular and religious paratitular difficult to sustain. It may therefore be helpful to think of the Anglican chaplain as being embedded in the system, sometimes responding to the individual over against the establishment and at other times responding to the legitimate and inevitable requirements of the establishment. Such a loose framework is needed in order to accommodate the range of connotations which "liturgy" holds for chaplains.

### **6.3 "You are what you eat." From body of Christ to hymn sandwich**

Most respondents see themselves as liturgy practitioners in some way though their practice varies widely from adherence to prescribed Eucharistic liturgy to what some term "hymn sandwiches" as well as the apparently

ubiquitous candle lighting. Some respondents recognize variety within their own practice while acknowledging the primacy of the Eucharist. Alf rejects the suggestion that he might conduct a hymn sandwich as the main weekly service:

I am a priest and to me priests celebrate the Eucharist on a Sunday, other times, but particularly on a Sunday. If they want someone to do a hymn sandwich then they can buy someone in to do a hymn sandwich a damn sight cheaper than me, and that is at the heart of my own personal ministry. To me the Eucharist is inclusive.....If I am celebrating, everybody, *everybody* who is there should be allowed to receive because Jesus was born in a cowshed full of shit and basically that is my beginning.

For Alf the celebration of the Eucharist is fundamental to his ontological view of himself and his role. There is a latent recognition that he does on Sunday what a parish priest would do, with the implication that the prison chapel is his church, where he officiates and worships. (Although we did not speak about it I observed Alf saying the morning office in the chapel, as other chaplains do and as I did.) A further implication is that the hymn sandwich is a lesser liturgy or ritual. He cites the biblical birth narrative (Luke 2, vi-vii) in vivid terms to underpin his view of the Eucharist as totally accessible and inclusive. Not only is it central to his identity but also, “if you week by week celebrate it, it makes sense to men.” The Eucharist and the welcome which is implied by its inclusivity come to make sense to the prisoners by ritual repetition. A comparably essentialist statement was made by Heather: “I don’t think that I have ever properly been an Anglican chaplain except arguably when I am taking an Anglican communion service or conducting a baptism.” In their different ways both Alf and Heather seem to recall Dix’s famous passage on the Eucharist:

It is because it became embedded deep down in the life of the Christian peoples, colouring all the *via vitae* of the ordinary man and woman, marking its personal turning-points, marriage, sickness, death and the rest, running through it year by year with the feasts and fasts and the rhythm of the Sundays, that the eucharistic action became inextricably woven into the public history of the Western world. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn,1945, 745)

Affirmation of the essential centrality of the Eucharist came from Maurice. This surprised me because, whereas Alf's practice might be deduced from his high churchmanship, Maurice's strong sacramentality could not necessarily be inferred from a theology which otherwise emphasises the direct personal relationship of the individual with God. Maurice, however, links the Eucharist with the significance of the restorative-practice based STP:

The holy Eucharist, the heart of the service, is about restorative justice, the confession and absolution. As part of the STP programme a husband and wife whose son was murdered speak to the prisoners who hear the broken hearted cries of a mother and father who have lost a son through a violent crime. And then all of a sudden there is this reality check and I think that this is what the gospel does, and this is what we relive, with every, and I don't mean to keep on bringing it back to the holy Eucharist but it is a celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. A celebration of his *passio*, the *passio cum*, the suffering with, and that we suffer with Christ in his suffering and you know if we share in his death, we share his resurrection....

Maurice perceives the Eucharist to be consistent with the restorative aims of STP and the wider restorative practice of his establishment although he is one of those who provide other forms of service. The actions of the Eucharist seem to Maurice to be almost a physical embodiment of what is said during STP sessions:

I always tell the young people you know I don't get too terribly hung up, "I am not going to ask you what denomination you are but I will say this, that if you love Jesus even so small as a mustard grain that you love him that much but that you want to love him more, then come, come, this is the body and blood of Christ broken and shed for you, come. You are what you eat, come, be the body, be the hands and feet, be what Christ is calling you to." And the response is so powerful.....and it is just so transformational, Peter, and deeply, deeply humbling, I can't tell you how humbling it is.

Maurice's inclusive view is comparable with Alf's although he links the Eucharistic liturgy more explicitly with programme aims and institutional priorities as reflected in "transformational", an unwitting echo of Turner. He perceives the Eucharist and its potential effect as more physical and instinctual than Alf, who stresses the ritual element more overtly. The difference between their personal reactions also interested me; whereas Alf takes a clearly ontological stance ("I am a priest and priests celebrate the

Eucharist...”) Maurice makes a more emotional appeal (“come, come”) and is in turn more visibly affected by the Eucharistic experience (“deeply, deeply humbling, I can’t tell you how humbling it is.”) Throughout our dialogue I was struck by what seemed to me to be Maurice’s practical and emotional involvement both with STP and the Eucharist to the extent that researcher objectivity was threatened. I did, however, feel uneasy when the same victim input as had been used in the afternoon STP session was re-used in the evening to elicit conversions in a session which had its own pararitual pattern; it seemed that the distinction between an accredited programme and an evangelising event had become blurred.

Gervase also spoke of the transformational potential of the Eucharist and speculated that time in prison gives prisoners space to reflect upon their lives:

I celebrate Holy Communion two Sundays a month and mid-week as well. I think if we emphasise the significance of it, it has a really profound message in that it’s about taking a bad situation and turning it into a good one and that’s what God is able to do. I think sometimes when people who are in prison are suffering that can kind of set their suffering in a context so that they can perhaps start to deal with it.

Gervase is careful to stress the active role of the prisoner in the process of transformation as well as the chaplain’s duty to “emphasize the significance of it.” He implies a three way interaction between God, chaplain and prisoner. The provisionality of the final sentence (“can perhaps start”) echoes his image of the chaplaincy in a local prison: “Some people call it ambulance work, patching people up who are in trouble, sort of crisis, and that’s what does it for me really.” For Gervase, then, there is a potentially therapeutic and emollient potential in the Eucharist which is independent of secular programmes and priorities, which speaks to his own needs and priorities.

Iain also spoke of Sunday Eucharist services although in a different context, that of theological differences between Anglican chaplains and visiting groups who contribute to Sunday services: “They thought they were at a Roman Catholic service. Now to me it was fairly typical standard Anglican,

normal, just vestments, candles, pretty simplified liturgy....” For Iain the liturgical norm seems to reside in the visible aspects of liturgy (9.9) rather than in strict adherence to prescribed text; the apparent bewilderment of the visitors raises questions about the extent to which the service might accurately be described as Anglican. On the other hand, another Anglican chaplain, Alexandra, had heard about Iain’s Sunday services: “I have tried to get down and wanted to go to one of Iain’s services because he had, you know, a proper liturgy with incense and communion every week.” Her use of the term “proper liturgy” refers not only to the words of the service but to the whole ritual as something she feels she should be doing:

I was thinking the other day, I think liturgy, a more formal liturgy would actually be quite helpful for some of these men but it is very difficult when you have got musicians who are very evangelical as you can’t just suddenly say oh well let’s have incense or whatever.

She echoes Alf’s belief that repeated ritual will “make sense to the men” though in unspecified terms; it is Maurice who elaborates the actions and their alleged effect. Both Alf and Alexandra stress the ritual aspect of the Eucharist and its consistency with prison pararitual (“make sense”, “quite helpful”) whereas Maurice stresses the personal and individual benefits of the Eucharist, allying them with institutional priorities through intention and effect rather than ritual patterning. Ironically though, Maurice agreed with my suggestion that the question/response format of the STP workbook could be seen as a type of responsorial liturgy:

I think that is a marvellous parallel, Peter; that is a wonderful parallel and I have drawn parallels between the holy Eucharist and Sycamore [Tree Project] but never to quite that extent. That really is quite an insight and it is interesting because when we share in the liturgy every Sunday I always ask the young people “Pray what you mean; I would invite you take part in every aspect of the service but if you don’t feel that you mean it, if you don’t believe it, then for heaven’s sake don’t pray it because you will bring judgement upon yourself,” and that is the same with Sycamore, we have to make sure that they know it and they mean it and they feel it, that it is a liturgy..... But I think that there is a real connection there of a real parallel and it is almost as you say a catechism,

Maurice likens the need for integrity in prayer with a need for comparable integrity in responding to the questions in the STP workbook. Although I had suggested the comparison he offered the word “catechism” himself. It may, therefore be plausible to think of the pararitualistic STP as reflecting the more ritualized Eucharist and other religious ritual both in terms of format and their invocation of personal integrity.

For Alf and Iain, for Alexandra and Maurice, both of whom use “power” to define the Eucharist, it defines their identity as priests, whether as the definitive mark of their priestly being, whether as the central act of the Church or as a vessel of personal salvation. It might be argued that the enacting of these rituals by priests of the established church amplifies the establishment’s and the system’s repertoire of ritual and pararitual especially when it is apparently in harmony with institutional priorities and performance criteria. Alternatively, it can be argued that the emphasis on the individual communicants and the implicit expectations of them stand against the depersonalization (Clemmer’s “prisonization”) inherent in conformity to carceral norms and expectations. To this extent the rituals and pararituals of the chaplain can be thought of as bi-directional, both contributing to the pararituals which tend towards depersonalization on the one hand, and affirming the identity and worth of the individual on the other.

For other chaplains the Eucharist is an opportunity to innovate and experiment. Heather, who felt that she was “only really an Anglican chaplain when taking a communion service or a baptism”, reveals in a different part of the dialogue that she is not wedded to the strict forms of COE liturgy which she sees as presenting too great a language barrier. She claims that, “I am not a liturgist in the sense of creating services or anything else; that is really not my thing; I think creativity is finding the right hymns that go with the readings.” This implies adherence at least to the COE lectionary and service template, an impression confirmed by her speculation that the bishop finds Iona services “to be acceptably orthodox in an informal setting.” This exemplifies the dilemma for a chaplain whose default position is in liturgical tradition but who recognises its unsuitability for her congregation and feels

at least some compulsion to acknowledge the authority of her bishop. Her solution seems to be to somewhat deformalize an act which is both public and hidden.

Adam, chaplain of a category C of which approximately half the population is composed of foreign nationals does not so much create new services or borrow from outside the Anglican tradition as from within the wider Anglican communion:

We need to be loyal to the concept of common prayer and not just looking back to 1662 but actually acknowledging as an Anglican family there are lots of approaches to the way that worship and prayers are structured that we do in common. And as well as allowing a more free and contextual form of expression for the places we are at..... it gives a chance here to show to them, what is a wonderfully flourishing church and chapel community here, the fact that people around the globe have, certainly in Anglican churches, a common structure and approach to prayers.

Adam shows himself to be rooted in the traditions and practice of Anglicanism; he is aware of, and adheres to, the COE tradition of common prayer but also draws upon Anglican liturgies current in other countries so that he attempts to tap into the specifically Anglican tradition of his prisoners' home countries. For him, the Eucharistic liturgy is not only a connection with Anglican origins; it is a way of manifesting commonality with the background and traditions of a geographically varied community while acknowledging their current surroundings.

Pauline shows herself to be more of an innovator than Heather. Her stance is different from the chaplains mentioned so far in this section. She affirms the centrality of the Eucharist but holds the service on a Saturday rather than as the main service on a Sunday "because not everybody can cope with a communion service." For her, the Eucharist is an opportunity to create community by giving prisoners "an opportunity to contribute...community matters to me, Peter.... we have a constantly changing community but I want people to own it." Pauline speaks here of a closer, though not exclusive, community gathered around the communion table. She is not the only respondent to make an implicit link between communion and community

and to imply a closely focused, though not exclusive, normative *communitas*, a structured group – a liminoid in Turnerian terms - within the broader chapel attendance, itself a loosely structured group within the total establishment population.

Becky, like Alexandra and Maurice, refers to the power of the Eucharist and a community gathered around the sacrament, contrasting its formal liturgy with what others call a hymn sandwich. Her thoughts imply a pastoral quality to the act of gathered worship like Pattison's, but avoiding the reduction of "one ministerial activity to another so that there is no distinction between them. Pastoral care is not the same as worship." (Pattison 2000, 17)

I would regularly have communion here which again fosters community, it is a gathering around the table, you know. What more visible tangible sign is there of community, you know? And I give out the host to people and I try and look at them and I think, you know, the power of that, you know; they have broken people's lives but God has broken his own self for their sake. And that is incredibly powerful, and you know some say, "Oh I don't believe, I don't do communion, not my tradition," but I won't give it up. We have sort of in our Eucharistic services different groups coming in, there is something and nothing. There are a few hymns, a couple of readings, a poem and there is nothing there and I tolerate them because it kind of shuts some of the other guys up as it is not their tradition. But they are, you know over time I do think that it brings, the gathering around the table, the liturgy brings people together and it is sharing the peace, which again some of them don't like, but it is a connection, it is such a touch-deprived place in prisons.

Becky seems to detect in the Eucharist, both as a divine mystery and as a ritual of words and actions ("liturgy brings people together"), the "power" to unite ("fosters community") and contrasts its substance with the more diffuse practice of visiting groups ("nothing there") whilst accommodating such practice as a concession to those who are wary of communion. Her perspective reflects her own assessment of herself as liberal catholic Anglican since she asserts the power of the Eucharist over against less formal worship activities but sees it as a means to consolidating community rather than as an expression of achieved unity. Her view is essentially instrumental but also reflects Alf's opinion that repetition of the ritual will eventually ("over time") make sense, but whereas Alf stresses significance for the

individual (“if it is special for me it can be special for you”), Becky seems more concerned to develop an open community based on the tradition and formality of the Eucharist. For her, though, there is an important pastoral element in the physicality of exchanging the peace in “such a touch deprived place.”

I write in 7.5 about touch deprivation as a feature of prison ministry. By encouraging the personal, sensuous action of shaking hands or hugging Becky appears to stand in opposition to the depersonalizing processes of the prison; it is relevant to note here that she is chaplain to a prison which houses a high proportion of sex offenders, to whom she perceives the staff to be hostile. Her actions in ministering to the most marginalized and reviled prisoners in the carceral system are, therefore, clearly counter cultural: “they have broken people’s lives but God has broken his own self for their sake.” Her words echo Graham’s assertion that,

The corporate communion of the body of Christ is the visible sign of a practice of resistance to exclusive and foreclosive understandings of personhood, opening our horizons to a more generous apprehension of the nature of God. (Graham 2009, 88)

Elsewhere she shows informed awareness of the dangers associated with sex offenders and religious conversion (Wire1992, 73). Her group of chapelgoers and communicants can be thought to form a distinct counter community, a small normative *communitas*. If the carceral system tends towards identity reduction and deprivation of material things, then Becky can be seen as trying to reacquaint people with their physical selves both through inter-personal contact and through the physicality implied in the sacrament of Christ’s body upon the altar around which the community gathers. This is normative *communitas* isolated from - but not closed to - the wider prison community.

Although a majority of respondents indicate that liturgy is a significant component of their self-perceived identity, fewer celebrate the Eucharist as the main service on Sundays. Others, like Pauline, hold the celebration on another day. Esther, who holds a communion service on Thursday mornings,

makes the contrast, echoing Iain: “The communion service, of course, is a set order whereas Sundays we have groups in once a fortnight, sometimes more often, and they bring all sorts of things in terms of [Christian] theology.” She implies different levels of engagement between Thursday and Sunday, recognising that the Sunday congregation is more varied and that a more diverse provision is appropriate for them. If, as in some prisons, prisoners are discouraged or prevented by the Education department or their workplace from attending the communion service, there is a possibility that the group will become closed or defined by its membership. I became aware of this in HMP Norborough, a private prison, where Freddie, the Anglican chaplain, told me of a Thursday morning communion attended by those able to get there:

**What about communion services?** We don’t have that on Sunday any more. I quickly realised when I came that most of the lads weren’t confirmed and it meant nothing to them, so it meant that you would end up with sixty, seventy lads in and five would come forward for communion. Everybody else just used it for a general chit chat. So I scrapped that and we have it on a Thursday morning now with the group and that is a beautiful time, you know, very serious, everybody together sort of thing, you know....Anyway, I’m afraid I’m sort of liberal in who celebrates communion to be honest and in here it just seemed to be right that I actually allowed them to pass the bread, to break the bread and pass it round and he is the lad with these incredible scars on his hands and arms and I think that theologically that was just sort of saying something very powerfully through him to us, you know, the broken scarred God doing this, you know.

Part of this passage appears earlier (4.2.2) to indicate an area in which chapel time and space are contestable. This longer extract suggests a fundamental contradiction between Freddie’s apparent insistence on confirmation as a prerequisite for understanding the communion service (in contrast to Alf and Becky) and his willingness to allow a prisoner to perform the liturgical actions, something which other chaplains – and possibly even the bishop – would consider uncanonical. This is a step beyond involving prisoners in service planning to handing over certain priestly functions central to the Eucharist so that their involvement becomes active and total. The contradiction lies in Freddie’s view of restricted access to the Eucharist (“the group”) in line with traditional church initiation rites over against his radical

adaptation of COE rubrics (“I’m afraid I’m sort of liberal in who celebrates communion.”) His reasoning is strongly counter cultural on the one hand in that he gives his own authority over to a prisoner while, on the other hand, acting as a gatekeeper in allowing or preventing access to the activity. He acts both with the system and against the system: “I think that probably as time moves on I see us less as prisoners but more as one body.” Since he effectively delegates presidency to a lay person he is also swimming against the current tide of the COE in a way which would be at least contentious and probably forbidden on the outside. In this, Freddie seems to use a liminal situation, isolated from the Church as the prisoners are isolated from society, to develop a radically unorthodox, situated form of practice. In terms of ritual process his adaptation to the prison context is comparable with Clemmer’s prisonization and Turner’s normative *communitas*.

Less radical than Freddie is Robin who conducts a Sunday communion service but also has a more private, effectively closed “little communion service for them”:

The Bible study group, the last one before Easter, I do a little communion service for them and the inmates themselves run the group. So they will do the readings, some will give a short talk and they do some prayers and it is really good.

“For them” implies that Robin does not surrender the presidency as Freddie does. He outlines a contrast between this service and the Sunday communion service where the input of a wide range of visitors is included in the communion, which he uses as a touchstone for faith commitments which have already been made:

Sometimes someone, you know, who is an evangelist is called to evangelise in prison. I think they think probably the Gospel isn’t there and they ought to bring it in and so they will do their good solid evangelistic talk and they will get them to stand or to raise their hands and they say, “Oh that’s marvellous, we saw 10 people saved today, that’s absolutely wonderful.” No doubt they will go back and tell their friends. The fact is that those 10 have probably been coming to Chapel some time and come to communion and have often prayed. I mean I am not knocking it, I am just saying that you know try to save the guys and they say, “Well it is wonderful that they are all willing to stand,”

but, erm, you know, they obviously wanted to reaffirm the commitments that they have been making in the past.

This appears to show, as with Iain, a collision between the evangelical practices of independent churches and the more ritualised theology of the COE. The same chaplaincy can embrace a wide range of faith based and ritual-like activity. Esther makes a similar point about Sunday services which, although not Eucharistic, have a ritual-like shape:

We sort of start off with a gathering prayer and then sing something and then we have their prayers and then, you know, if it is just me on my own then we will have somebody doing the reading and then I will sort of rabbit on about it and, depending on how much time we have got, we might do a bit more singing or a bit less or whatever and then wrap it all up with a prayer at the end. I mean, it is, I describe it to the women as a hymn sandwich.

This Sunday service is more ritualised than Esther seems to realize since she refers only to a “basic framework”; although she speaks of it in informal language (“sing something... somebody... sort of rabbit on... might do a bit more... or whatever”) there appears to be a consistent template: gathering prayer – song – prisoner prayers (read and placed on altar) - reading – talk – song(s) – closing prayer. The shape might be said to approximate to that of COE Morning and Evening Prayer except, as with Robin, “what happens in the middle depends on who comes in.” In the Thursday morning communion she shows herself to be responsive to prisoners’ needs and abilities yet conservative in largely adhering to COE *Common Worship* texts:

I use probably the shortest of the Eucharistic prayers but we do the Peruvian Gloria and I use the baptismal creed because I think that both of those, you know, in sort of formal liturgy the language is far too complicated and it goes on for far too long.

For these chaplains, who range in their assessments from extreme conservative evangelicals to the most liberal Anglican Catholics, the Eucharist is the act of faith, a ritual to be enacted on a weekly basis and at the Christmas and Easter festivals. Its place in the weekly timetable is not necessarily significant; for some, a minority, it is the main service of the week while for others it is a more intimate gathering of the faithful held during the week for those able to get to it, sometimes in the face of disapproval from

work place or education department. The Sunday Anglican service, whatever shape it is given, is a legal requirement even if it becomes a more generically Christian service than closely Anglican. To this extent it is – or should be – an integral part of the weekly institutional pattern of ritual-like activities. If the Eucharist is not celebrated on Sundays then it has to fit as best it can, taking its place behind other core day activities. In this sense and in some establishments the Eucharist can be seen as a counter-institutional activity, a counter cultural, ritual-like activity.

#### 6.4 “A divine pickling agent”

There are other chaplains who, for practical and theological reasons, celebrate the Eucharist rarely, if at all. Daniel, who describes himself as a conservative evangelical, says:

I tend to feel that some people see taking communion as an essential part of keeping them saved and I don't see that. You know, it is almost as though communion becomes a divine pickling agent preserving “thy body and soul into everlasting life” and you have got to keep taking it and it is..... a form of words keeping yourself right with God by doing an act.

Clearly, this opinion is the polar opposite of the views of Alf, Alexandra and Becky. This does not mean that Daniel is dismissive of the Eucharist, rather the opposite:

I usually do a communion service here twice a year..... **Right**..... Christmas and Easter, the reason for that being is that the lads who come along almost inevitably most of them are really, they are searching for a faith, they don't yet have a faith and because of the high view I have of communion in a strange sort of way, you know it is a bit sacrilegious. Added to that ..... when I have had communion services on a normal Sunday, because I used to do one a month, the black prisoners wouldn't participate. And the white guys would come up and they would have the bread and wine but some of them, not all of them, but the black guys wouldn't; they would maybe have a blessing some of them but they wouldn't take communion. So it became something which was divisive and I didn't want that because to me communion symbolises unity, the unity of the church and the blood of Christ that was shed for all of us. So it was quite uncomfortable, added to that and when you administer and there is (*sic*) people larking because it is always a good opportunity for them when you are otherwise occupied to mess about.

Daniel's reasoning is complex but founded in both practicality and theology. He has perceived, as have other chaplains (for example Becky), that the Eucharist can be socially divisive along ethnic lines and provide an opportunity for potentially disruptive behaviour. In theological terms he perceives this disunity to be antithetical to the significance of the Eucharist. In addition, the prisoners' lack of "a faith" precludes their being admitted to the communion ("a bit sacrilegious"). Although Daniel does not refer to it, he echoes the preface and exhortation "at the time of the celebration of the communion", contained in the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer. For analogous reasons Daniel rarely conducts the rite of baptism because,

I think it's important... the last person I baptised was somebody who got a life sentence.. But many of the guys are here only for a short time so what I want them to do....when you are baptised you are baptised not just as a Christian, you are baptised into the Church, and so I want them to find a church outside that will support them.

As with Eucharist, Daniel manifests a high view of baptism; both imply stress upon preparation and readiness. Whereas Alf and Becky amongst others seem to attribute transformational potential to the ritual itself, Daniel reflects a more implicitly Calvinist view of the necessity to ally the sacraments with the words of scripture and faith in them. This relative absence of liturgical ritual is to some extent evident in the furnishing of the chapel for, whilst there is a table at the front, at the rear there is a pool table and an informal seating area. Daniel's ministry seems to be largely relational; his preference for not baptising and not celebrating the Eucharist could be thought to remove the distinguishing marks of the COE (Avis 2000, 74). I discuss his relative disaffiliation from Anglican structures in 9.10. His ritual engagement with the institution is therefore largely limited to the secular statutory duties and holding Sunday services. Nevertheless, he is an enthusiastic proponent of STP although as facilitator rather than as active participant. I have already shown how STP can be seen as a ritual-like activity which contributes to the reforming and rehabilitating aims of the prison. On one hand, then, Daniel participates actively in the pararitual repertoire of the prison but, on the other hand, subverts institutional ritual tendencies by emphasising

informality and individuality: “You build relationships with people over the six week period on a regular basis; you get to know their story.”

Both Daniel and Freddie defined themselves as conservative evangelicals (though Daniel added that he was socially liberal) but their engagements with religious ritual are markedly different. While Freddie sees it almost as a platform from which to depart, Daniel regards participation in it as a destination towards which the individual must make their own journey.

Even within the same (admittedly arbitrary) classification, chaplains still follow their own interpretation of tradition to produce idiosyncratic variants of liturgical practice.

### **6.5 Eucharist as prison ritual**

Eucharistic practice varies widely, as it does in the COE nationally; Prison Rules do not specifically require celebration of the Eucharist, only that “Divine Service” should be conducted. The chaplain therefore, has discretion over whether and how it should be celebrated, whether as an open invitation or as a symbol of the faith of the gathered chapel community. There is an underlying irony in the fact of the tension which is created by the legal definition of the Anglican chaplains’ duties and their freedom to interpret them according to their own theology and ecclesiology. While chaplains undertake other rituals and pararituals, many of them declare the Eucharist to be the *ne plus ultra* of what they do; had I discussed it with each respondent, many more might have expressed a similar view. Those who circumscribe access to the Eucharist or the occasions on which it is celebrated are not in any sense anti-sacramental; they see it as a culmination or a concomitant of positive faith development and are less convinced of its transformational efficacy simply as ritual. It might be argued that this is consistent with a prison policy and practice which emphasises earned incentives and privileges. In contrast to this, the open invitation to the Eucharist, whether as main service or as a midweek celebration, suggests a universal access and welcome available to all who approach the sacrament. With its implicit welcome and nurturing, offered without restriction, it may

even be seen as a counter ritual to the pararitualistic reception process which strips and deprives each individual. This perspective, espoused by self-defining liberal catholic chaplains, contrasts not only with more conservative Anglican views but with the practice of the Roman Catholic mass. It needs to be emphasised that the possibility and incidence of such liberality is enabled by statute. The law may therefore be regarded as embodying and underwriting the opportunity for counter cultural ritual.

The counter, even potentially subversive, qualities of this unique context would include the giving of Christ's body to bodies under constraint, the opportunity for ritual confession and absolution, the transforming properties claimed for the sacrament. While the prison pararitual inscribes uniformity and conformity upon the body, the Eucharist implies release from physical limitation and incorporation into a different body, the body of Christ, whether it be the inscribing of Christ's body upon the prisoners' or the inscribing of theirs upon his. The next section moves from more formal to less formal liturgy.

#### **6.6 "The pastoral end of liturgy": candle lighting**

The "candles" are usually tealights, often bought at chaplains' own expense. Prisoners ask to light candles at times of bereavement, memorialising or other anxieties. Candle lighting can be seen as an act of self-reclamation, a reassertion of selfhood. It can also be seen as a symbolic step out of prison since most candle lighting takes place in the prison chapel or, much less frequently, in the world faith area. I originally underestimated the ubiquity and solemnity of the act of lighting a candle although, as a former cathedral chaplain, I was used to people entering the building expressly to light a candle for a personal reason and to spend some time in a quiet space. Like prisoners in the prison chapel, some wanted to remain anonymous while others welcomed the pastoral opportunity with someone whom they did not know and who was associated with a place where it was safe to reflect upon grief, anxiety and their own wrong doings. The validity of the comparison is strengthened by the words of a prisoner who, having lit a candle, said to me,

“I’m only telling you all this because you don’t matter. I don’t mean to be rude but when I leave here I’ll never see you again – I hope.”

It was with this in mind that I made a second approach to my respondents. This time, however, my request for their reflections was contained in an email (Appendix 2). I refer to interview and email responses separately.

### **6.6.1 Candle lighting: interview responses**

A number of respondents mention candle lighting as a prisoner ritual although it is so open to multiple adaptation and contextualisation that pararitual may be a more apt term. I have found it difficult to think about it separately from the prison chapel and the figure of the chaplain – not necessarily the Anglican chaplain. There seemed at first to be some evidence that it might be a significantly gendered activity, though not exclusively so. Ronald, who has ministered in both the male and the female estate, remarks that “lighting a candle (is) much more evident in a women’s prison than it is in a men’s prison.” Esther seems to corroborate Ronald’s assertion and identifies candle-lighting as a pararitual rooted in the prisoner group rather than in institutional protocol: “It’s one of those things that they do..... I think it happens in other, certainly in women’s prisons as well and I think in men’s prisons.” Esther and Claudia know each other well professionally and, in dialogue with each other, discuss candle lighting with deceptively detached amusement: “sometimes the altar looks like Blackpool illuminations”, “We get through a fortune in tea lights courtesy of IKEA who have the cheapest tea lights.” Claudia recalls Christmas “where they just come in droves and it saves us spending the whole of Christmas week lighting loads and loads of individual candles.” Their apparent lightness of tone conceals the potential emotional charge of being with prisoners at such times.

There are data from respondents in both male and female establishments which link candle lighting to what Lane (2011, 25) terms “disenfranchised grief.” This is grief which cannot be vented, shared or subsumed in the activities which might otherwise accompany bereavement, memorializing and other major life events. Prisoners cannot participate in or influence

arrangements on the outside so the loss of this potential for action, both processual and social, compounds the losses which accompany entry to the prison and which are sustained throughout the sentence.

George comments upon bereavement as a trigger for symbolic ritual though not necessarily in the framework of a set liturgy: “There are lots of closet Christians who when granny dies will want to come to chapel and light a candle, who are on the books either as non-specified or no religion.” George is actually responding to a comment about Anglican chaplains’ statutory responsibility for prisoners who register no faith but nevertheless discover a need for symbolic, ritual-like action. Gervase, too, speaks of the symbolic value of lighting a candle, although in more explicitly sacramental terms which might also be thought therapeutic:

Of course, the niceties of ritual go out of the window really, don’t they? There are useful things in the church’s tradition that we can use – candle lighting is really symbolic. Baptism and holy water is another really symbolic thing ..... just to remind them that they are part of God’s family and that that’s the journey they’re engaged in.

Gervase seems to recognise an improvisatory quality to some pararitual, including candle lighting, and to be speaking more from an ecclesiastical position than some other chaplains although his aim “just to remind them” echoes George’s “closet Christians”.

Tom also speaks of a need to make a physical expression of a memorial or a hope: “Those times of need that you might want to go and light a candle in a church or spend some time away. But most people don’t identify themselves as being particularly religious.” He recognises that candle lighting is not necessarily associated with being “religious” but he seems to fight shy of separating the two altogether.

There are, perhaps, more potential events of a personal, physical nature in a woman’s life than in a man’s. Esther suggests why the candle pararitual might be more characteristic of women’s prisons, “for women who have lost children, where there has been... a.. sort of... still birth or a miscarriage or abortion.” Esther told me subsequently in a written statement (added to

interview transcript as an appendix) of a woman who had had an abortion the previous day and felt an urgent need for chapel time to light a candle.

When I collected her, she brought a friend to support her. She told me what I already knew, that she was a Catholic, or that her family were, but that they supported her and her reasons. What was obvious was that she grabbed me because I was outside the chapel and identifiable as a chaplain, & she needed some chapel time. The sort of chaplain was irrelevant to her.

Given the RC interdict on abortion I question the assertion in Esther's final sentence; the woman would have realised that Esther could not possibly be a RC priest and could therefore fulfil her urgent need without the possibility of judgement or recrimination.

It is in these contexts that candle lighting functions as an act of reclamation of selfhood, a temporary re-entry into a suspended biography through a rite of passage, an act of rebirth with the chaplain as midwife; a symbolic step out of prison and a potential but sanctioned act of subversion.

### **6.6.2 Reclamation of selfhood: candle lighting as a subversive pararitual**

Esther narrates an event which illustrates how the candle pararitual accrues a range of possible inputs by the prisoner, depending upon their preference and choice:

I suppose because it's part of the culture, um, you know, if they've not been in before someone will say, "Go and ask the chaplain, you can go and light a candle," and I think it's word of mouth as well..... but it's something which is one of their rituals – and sometimes they might want a bit more than that. Someone stopped me earlier in the week and said, "What can I do?" She explained, "My father died," and she'd been on drugs at the time and she'd been to the funeral and her feelings were coming to the surface and she wanted to do something about it and I said, "Well you can come and light a candle if you like." She said, "Oh, I'd like to do that." So I said, "Would you like a little service?" So she said, "Yes please," and we do a little memorial service which they can take away with them afterwards; it has their name and it has the name of the person the service is for and it has a space in the middle of that for them to light a candle. So she's doing that tomorrow. I always say to them, "This is for your benefit, not ours." If they say, "What am I supposed to do now?" I say, "Well, it's up to you. If you want to sit here and be quiet for a bit, sit here and be quiet for a

bit." And sometimes I'll say, "I'm in the office at the back, stay here as long as you want."

Esther appears to recognize a loose structure of tradition, activity and communication, ("part of their culture", "ask the chaplain" and "word of mouth") which, as Tom suggests (6.6.1) mirrors custom and practice in the more conventionally structured world outside. The counter establishment element emerges in Esther's deferring to the prisoner's preference and in the co-construction of occasional, personalised liturgy ("we do a little memorial service"), crystallised in the sentence, "I always say to them, "This is for your benefit, not ours."" The final sentence seems to subvert the rigid time structure of the prison day where time and activity almost define each other. I refer to the above quotation again in 6.6.3 to emphasize candle-lighting as a feature predominantly of the underlife of the prison.

If Esther and Claudia seem sometimes detached, even amused by the candle lighting culture, the potential for their own emotional engagement emerges when a prisoner affects grief at the death of a relative, lights a candle in chapel but is proved, when Esther carried out the usual procedure of confirming the authenticity of the information, to have been lying in order to get drugs brought in on a visit: "That really threw me because I had actually been quite upset." The whole narrative might also be adduced to illustrate the need for chaplains to balance compassion with institutional procedure and an element of scepticism which may, as in this case, involve recorded personal phone calls being listened to, though not by the chaplain.

Nevertheless, this indicates that the chaplain is at once both an agent of the prison and counter agent by, on the one hand, emphasising conformity to rules and the need for security surveillance and, on the other hand, enabling activities which, if not actually subversive, cut across the grain of prison aims and practice. The lighting of a candle implies the latter but the chaplain cannot escape her shared responsibility for the former. While she might be thought complicit in the prisoner secretly reclaiming a measure of selfhood, she is also necessarily and actively implicated in the processes and rituals which circumscribe that selfhood.

### 6.6.3 Candle lighting: email responses

My email inviting thoughts and comments about candle lighting appears at *Appendix 6*; it elicited a 49% return. Responses, taken together, were both wider ranging and more detailed than interview responses and served to supplement them after I began to realise the ubiquity and significance of candle lighting. They also removed the “you know” either as verbal filler or as a reference to my own participant experience, although Ronald ended his message with the observation, “I am sure you will resonate with this from your own days as a prison chaplain.”

It appeared from responses that the chapel is itself a visible liturgy and a significant area for chaplains because it is an area of quiet and stillness where prisoners seem to feel safe to recollect their own selfhood either simply by being there or by performing a symbolic action. Responses indicate that most, if not all, lighting of candles takes place in the prison chapel. This does not necessarily betoken a consciously or specifically religious act such as intercessory prayer, although this does, of course, as Iain says, occur, “sometimes with a chaplain saying a prayer and sometimes only the physical act with silence.” Respondents perceive that prisoners attach importance to the fact that, as Angus puts it, “The chapel is quiet and peaceful. It means that there’s time away from the noise of the wing.” Similarly, Robin comments, “When a prisoner has had a bereavement or is unable to attend the funeral, men often want to sit quietly in chapel and light a candle. They don’t always want a chaplain to say a prayer.” Another observation, by Tom, seems to underline the importance of the chapel as a place of quiet set aside from an otherwise noisy environment and indicates its importance as such for prisoners who declare no faith: “Sometimes if they have no faith they may just like to sit in quiet and light a candle for themselves.” Barbara ties the practice somewhat more closely to Christian belief: “We have a small area with an altar and a couple of chairs and a ‘Tree of Life’ (a bare branch) on which we hang prayers written on cards in the shape of leaves to remember the departed at the time of or on the anniversary of their deaths.” This area

seems to associate a specifically religious symbol, the altar, with a more neutral, free-floating symbol, the Tree of Life.

The above data suggest that the chapel, the location of candle lighting, resonates beyond its specific faith associations, the place where more formal religious ritual is enacted. This resonance seems to arise from the perception of the chapel as a space where the most personal memories, griefs and anxieties can be acknowledged safely with a measure of prisoner control over the level and nature of support from chaplains. It is even possible to make a case for the chapel as a kind of liminoid within the prison, a space where it is possible to perform actions which are symbolic of recollecting an earlier or remembered self. In this case the candle can be said to become a symbolic object as much as the act of lighting one is a symbolic act. This was poignantly captured in the words of a prisoner recollected by Roger in his interview:

There was a man in the chapel one day and he was in tears at the back of the chapel and I knew him so I thought.... so I .. you always wonder.... do I go up to him or not, I put my arm around his shoulder. I said, "John, what's wrong?" And he said, "Chaplain, I forgot I was in prison." And when he remembered the tears came and the whole atmosphere was so special, you know? He forgot for that time where he was; he thought he was free and then he realised he wasn't...

For this man the symbolic stepping out of prison became, albeit briefly, almost real.

Having ascribed symbolic significance to the candle, the act of lighting it and to the location, I shall now consider what meanings are attached to the act of lighting by prisoners and chaplains. The data, both from interviews and emails, suggest that candle lighting is seen as a form of memorial for a friend or family member who has died, either on the anniversary of a death or at the time of the funeral when, as in the comment above by Robin, the prisoner is unable to attend (either because the family do not want them there or for security reasons.) A number of respondents see the lighting of candles as, in Angus's words, "something that can be done". Jeanette is more explicit: "It's good to be able to do something at a time when the men feel so powerless to

help their families/friends.” Both chaplains recognise a value in action for its own sake, if only as a surrogate for more practical actions which might have been performed outside. Ben’s comment crystallises it:

They feel that they have done something to mark the occasion, and when you are powerless (as prisoners certainly feel at times of bereavement), to be able to do something to support the mourning process is all the more powerful.

Jeanette goes further in her email and attaches a brief narrative to her sensory account of candle ministry after saying that “an oft repeated phrase is ‘I should be there for them’”:

We will often just sit and watch the flame as it changes colour, dancing and leaping up then subsiding before it’s off again in a rhythm to a tune we sense but cannot hear. A rich seam of theology there! The candles have a burn time of 2 hours and it’s seldom that we are there for the whole time – though it has been known. My favourite memory is of lighting a candle in memory of a mum who had died following a long illness. The man was her son and had been her carer. He spoke of getting her ready for bed and saying ‘goodnight’. So when the moment came, we said ‘goodnight’ to her and blew the candle out. Just like getting her ready for sleep. It was moving and, I hope, helpful as part of the process of letting the deceased take her leave.

This account seems to open up a rich vein of symbolism in that it recalls and to some extent re-enacts actions which are central to the son’s compassionate and affective self. It is not clear who suggested the form of this simple but imaginative ceremony but it seems to have been an act of co-operation between chaplain and prisoner, allowing him to reclaim that affective part of himself and to some extent to re-rehearse it. In this instance, the lighting and watching of the candle, the words around it and the significance attached to them are suggested as therapy for the prisoner (“letting the deceased take her leave.”) Both Ben and Jeannette, like Robin, recognise the powerlessness of prisoners which arises from their incarceration and is symbolised by the reception process and its pararituals. While these rites of deprivation and mortification are no longer intended to humiliate prisoners, the effect nevertheless is to disenfranchise so that the sense of helplessness is magnified at times of personal and family stress. It could be said that the chaplain on such occasions co-operates in a temporary

reversal of that state, subverting the normalising thrust of the prison, but being legitimately empowered to do so.

Jeannette's story is one detached from any specific faith association and may, indeed, be thought to have more in common with the individualised actions and pararituals of movements which could be described as being part of the new spirituality. Nevertheless, both she and the prisoner are able to attach intensely symbolic significance to it. This is not always the case or, rather, a case is not always expressed; indeed the inexpressibility of an action is sometimes claimed as its power. Jeannette herself recognises this: "I think candle lighting is also a memory in itself; a religious action, like using holy water and wearing 'rosemary' beads, that is dimly understood to have some significance." [Prisoners often refer to rosaries as 'rosemaries'.] Dennis has a comparable view:

It seems to be a folk religion practice, much like hot cross buns at Easter. It is done with little or no knowledge of why. It is, however, giving a tangible focus to grief and it is something they can do (it seems important that *they* light the candle.) I consider that this is an expression of love, grief and memory very similar to putting flowers on a grave on certain anniversaries. This, of course, is my take on what is a very powerful and complicated human need and one that is neither expressed nor understood by almost all who practise it. I go to a family grave regularly to put flowers on it and linger awhile in thought. I have no idea why it is right or important, it just is. It is the same quite often when a candle is lit here in chapel. It is significant that it is placed on the altar to continue to burn.

Dennis is willing to identify with prisoners in their incomprehension of the act's potential significances, separate from any stated faith practice. He explicitly aligns his own incomprehension with the prisoners' in referring to his own practice in relation to a recent bereavement but acknowledges the importance of a physical act, "something that they can do", whether it is lighting the candle ("it seems important...") or placing flowers on a family grave. Just as the flowers remain on the grave so the candle continues to burn; Dennis cannot find a rationale for the importance of either; "it just is."

Both Ben and Maurice, however, relate candle lighting to the more specific faith practice of prayer. For Ben the candle's flame is important as a focal

point for men to whom prayer does not come easily either as a mode of communication with God or a god, or as an expression of aspiration in the face of anxiety:

The lighting of candles is a tangible form of prayer. When words fail the lighting of a candle enables someone who perhaps does not articulate prayer easily to offer something, and to focus on the flame with all the symbolism of light and hope that it brings.

Like Dennis he acknowledges the importance of both the tangibility and the apparent continuity of the flame (tea lights last only for two hours); it seems to be the promise or suggestion of continuity which the chaplains perceive as being important to the prisoners. Angus also writes of the candle symbolising “a glimmer of light in a dark place” and ties it more closely to scriptural reference: “We emphasise that Jesus is the ‘Light of the World’ and that ‘The Light shines in the Darkness’.”

I had assumed that candle lighting in prison was an activity almost exclusive to the Christian denominations despite having significance in other religions and in a secular context such as Amnesty International. Becky, however, writes that, “all chaplains on duty perform this irrespective of faith background, though it mostly falls to Christian chaplains.” Iain, too, observes that “most chaplains of most faith traditions use these lights either in corporate worship/meditation or as an expression of personal practice.”

It becomes clear from the interviews and from the emails that the lighting of candles has a symbolic value for multiple reasons. It may be retrospective, for the death of friends, family members and people who have died in prison. It may be an expression of hope for better times either for self or, as poignantly in women’s prisons, for children taken into care or for adoption as well as those aborted or miscarried. Such hope is mingled with the realisation of failure or culpability as a parent. Tom speaks of murderers who light candles and sit in silence on the anniversary of their victim’s death, sometimes close friends or members of their own families (as seen on Channel 4: *Lifers*. 25.06.2012). Robin writes of candles as a focus for hope as prisoners approach their release with its attendant anxieties and pararituals:

“It can be a symbol of the light of Christ going with them. I have been asked (to) get the candle put in their property so they can have it on release.” We can only speculate about what the significance might be for each individual. On one hand it might symbolise hope kindled while still in prison; on the other, it possibly constitutes a link with the liminoid after release, an ironic retreat to a safe or sacred place.

Tom writes about prisoners’ wish to commemorate deaths amongst their number. It was only towards the end of coding the emails that I realised that they and the interview data frame chapel and its activities as essentially prisoner space. Ben, however, writes of candle lighting as being also a staff activity: “When a former officer died of cancer recently, about thirty staff came up to light candles as a mark of respect....staff also call in during Patrol State if they have an anniversary of a death they wish to mark.” Within my data set this is the sole exception to the norm that candle lighting is a feature of the underlife of the prison; as Esther put it, “It’s part of their culture....one of their rituals.” (6.6.2)

The lighting of candles seems to be a pliable pararitual, largely detached from specific faith or ecclesial associations, with multiple contexts and significances, facilitated frequently – though not exclusively – by the Anglican chaplain. The practice is comparable with religious and vernacular practice (Graham 2009, 233) in the world outside the prison, seen in cathedrals and roadside shrines to the victims of road accidents. Tom suggests that Anglican churches on the outside fulfil this function but that it has limited take-up: “You might want to go and light a candle in a church..... but most people don’t identify themselves as being religious.” Esther, too, observes that: “It’s not as if they’d go into a church necessarily to do it because they wouldn’t necessarily go into a church in the first place.” It appears, then, that candle-lighting as an activity has a higher profile among prisoners than in the population at large. Several possible explanations can be advanced for this, not all of them exclusive of others. All prisoners will have - or should have - met a chaplain at least once and will be at least aware of their active presence in the establishment. For some, perhaps for most, it may be the first time

they have spoken with a faith representative of any kind, just as for many it is their first encounter with NHS staff. They may be aware of the existence of a space called chapel or world faith centre or mosque and will have been given a chaplaincy welcome leaflet. They will be more or less aware that there exists a range of activities open to all from formal services to the study of sacred writings. These are the formal means by which their awareness of chapel activities is formed. However, it seems to be clear that informally there is a more generalised view amongst prisoners of what chaplains do and what they can enable. It seems that they reflect Ben's assertion that "candle lighting is an important part of our ministry here." "Important" because it connects with the self of emotion and memory through the most personal and, frequently, the most painful areas of their lives; because it marks the giving of value to places, people and occasions to which they themselves ascribe value. It seems to signify a kind of passive determination to survive the mortification and deprivation processes of reception and subsequent prisonization. Goffman (1961, 31) remarks,

On the outside, the individual can hold objects of self-feeling – such as his body, his immediate actions, his thoughts, and some of his possessions – clear of contact with alien and contaminating things. But in total institutions these territories of the self are violated; the boundary that the individual places between his being and the environment is invaded and the embodiments of self profaned.

The lighting of a candle and its link with the correlative place, person or occasion can be seen as a re-embodiment of that self and being which have been invaded.

The universality of the pararitual suggests that Anglican chaplains, to a greater extent than their colleagues of other faiths and denominations, fulfil a role analogous to the COE parish priest in terms of availability but also one which is at least comparable with that of the therapist. The distinction is to be seen, perhaps, in the openness and availability of the candle pararitual as against the relatively enclosed celebrations of the Eucharist in most prisons; whilst not actually closed, it is clearly more of a focus for a gathering of those who incline towards a tighter ritual with more explicit and specific religious

associations. This too, though, tends towards reclamation and affirmation of individual selfhood since the liturgy crescendos from collective confession and absolution towards individual reception of the consecrated elements.

In organisational terms this can be seen to have a number of apparently antithetical functions simultaneously. All the respondents who supplied these data are paid employees of the Prison Service or, in two instances, private contractors, and are therefore inescapably part of the institution and the wider system; for some commentators, such as Forrester (2000, 86), this may represent an inevitable level of compromise. On the other hand their terms of employment require that they undertake liturgical and pastoral activities which accentuate the individual rather than the collective and hence reclaim a small part, albeit a part which is important to the prisoner, of the self symbolically stripped down in the process of reception. The lighting of candles is frequent and almost universal in English and Welsh prisons, and is acknowledged as “an important part of our ministry.” We should not overstress the significance of one simple act but, while chaplains speak of the centrality of the Eucharist in their ministry, it appears that what is more central in terms of praxis is an imported pararitual which sits not only across multiple faiths but within secular therapeutic practice which ranges from the professional to the cosmetic. The ubiquity of candle lighting helps to frame the chaplain as offering a ministry where any distinctions between the religious and the secular are blurred or impermanent.

## CHAPTER 7

### GENDER AS AN OPERATIVE FACTOR IN THE MINISTRY OF ANGLICAN PRISON CHAPLAINS

When, however, someone with a woman's body gets out of line, moves out of place, she calls into question these principles of the incarnate social order, thus calling into question the corporeal, symbolic, and social submission of subordinate women (Cassell 1988, 99)

7.1	Priesthood and gender: redefining priesthood	164
7.2	Gendered models of prison chaplaincy	165
7.3	Gender, embodiment and perceived prison service culture.	170
7.4	Gendered cross-postings and ministry to prisoners.	179
7.5	Chaplains and a ministry of touch	182
7.6	Women's ministry to women	183
7.7	Chaplains' gendered emotional responses	184
7.8	Sexism and harassment	186
7.9	Familial surrogacy and disclosure of abuse	187

#### 7.1 Priesthood and gender: redefining priesthood

Women have come to ordained chaplaincy relatively recently, following the ordination of the first women priests in England in 1994 and Wales in 1997. In 2013 the Representative Body of the CIW voted to authorize the consecration of woman as bishops, leaving only the COE of the four British Anglican churches in the anomalous position of restricting women's ordained ministry. Before then women assisted in prison chaplaincy in a lay capacity or as deacons, unable to celebrate the Eucharist except by extension, their situation reflecting that in the COE. Women priests began to join the Prison Service Chaplaincy within a year of the first ordinations. Sani and Reicher (2000, 105) make it clear that this development implies a re-examination of all priesthood, not only that of women. In this chapter, more than any other, I

am aware that different researchers would give different prompts from different perspectives and possibly elicit different narratives. (Gelsthorpe 2009, 879; Earle 2013, 18)

## **7.2 Gendered models of prison chaplaincy**

Gender has not so far been examined as a feature in the lives of female prison chaplains. This may be due to a paucity of research into Anglican prison chaplaincy and the relatively recent priesting of women. A few women who were licensed readers or deacons had served as chaplains before these dates but the overwhelming majority of Anglican chaplains had been white male priests who were also “the” chaplain in their institution as required by the Prisons Act of 1952. The invisibility of women chaplains in the research is similar to the invisibility of policewomen in Martin’s research (1996, 510-511). Gender issues, however, involve male chaplains and other prison staff as well as women. Sim (1994, 100-101) has highlighted the gradual gendering of prison studies resulting from gay and feminist studies, before which “these studies .... concentrated on *men as prisoners rather than prisoners as men.*” (italics in the original). One such study (Thomas 1972, xv) was an early analysis of the prison officer’s role prior to the Prison Service cross-posting policy in 1982 (Crawley 2004, 16), before which no female staff were employed in male prisons. Thomas felt able in 1972 to analyse the officer’s role without studying women officers or the prisons they worked in: “Except ..... where I specifically mention them, they are usually excluded.” It is equally unsurprising that even so complete a description of prison chaplaincy as that by Atherton (1987), writing from the perspective of a RC chaplain, should refer to prisoners and chaplains as generically male, despite the many women active in RC prison ministry.

There are, therefore, apart from Cowburn (1998), no theoretical reference points relating to women prison chaplains and few to other female staff in prisons; Crawley (2004, 191-196) and Liebling and Price (2001, 64-66) recount opinions expressed by and about women officers as part of a wider study of prison staff, Crawley noting references to sexist behaviour by male staff.

More detail and analysis are found in earlier literature about policewomen encountering “canteen culture” and its concomitants (Martin 1996, Brown 1998, Newburn & Stanko 1994.) There has been more research in those areas since the 1990s but these studies remain relevant because they reflect the responses of women entering upon a relatively new situation in which males predominate, and their strategies for coping with a milieu sometimes ambiguous and sometimes hostile. Cowburn (1998) writes not only about women officers but about female probation officers; although the latter, unlike chaplains, are not employed by the Prison Service, their situation is analogous in being based full time in prisons but without immediate custodial or disciplinary functions.

In addition to these I have found Cassell relevant in her study of women surgeons in the USA, especially her assertion that “gender is a process that is ‘negotiated and ‘done’”,(1998,48) as a way of avoiding the trap of biological determinism. I therefore write about gender not only as a given but also as a socially constructed mode of perceiving male and female chaplains. Cassell’s reference (1998,42) to female fighter pilots as women in “the wrong body” is echoed by two of my respondents, Heather and Penny (7.3), who set out to implement Prison Service systems more rigorously than their male colleagues and perceive in this a performative superiority, not merely equality. Bagilhole (2003, 373) notes this as a characteristic of some women clergy within the Church:

In some cases women are adopting traditional male roles. Experiencing the pressures the men have experienced, having to play the male ‘games’. Doing the job ‘like a man’, using male role models. The danger is that we may leave behind and/or compromise our femaleness.

The two respondents mentioned above have a concept of how certain tasks should be performed but perceive men to be failing in these areas so that they effectively eschew male role models. Secondly, it is not helpful to think of a male chaplain as necessarily fulfilling a stereotypically masculine role, even in a male prison. Tait (2008, 80) and Sim (1994, 112-113) comment on the difficulty some male staff experience in trying to offer covert and counter

cultural care to prisoners. Scott (2012, 201) proposes a four part typology of prison officers, careerist, humanitarian, disciplinarian and alienated 'mortgage payer'. Scott records that some of his "humanitarian" respondents were referred to by other officers as 'care bears' (a reference to infantilised and infantilising pictorial images) and that "In the research prison humanitarian officers were relatively marginalised, experiencing hostility from other members of staff who believed they were 'outsiders' or not proper prison officers."

This typification accords with one aspect of the implicitly structural analysis of a "Prison chaplain – Prison Officer Continuum" offered by Todd and Tipton in which chaplains were perceived as,

"being 'kinder', more 'sympathetic' characters and thus more inclined and suited to pastoral listening and counselling work..... prison officers being harder and not very good at dealing with emotion and prison chaplains softer and not particularly effective at discipline and control." (2011, 25-26)

Whilst the culture of each prison is different and recruitment from the armed forces has reduced, it is possible to see the male chaplain offering a mode of care which is more 'feminine' when seen against a stereotypically masculine approach and which may not be available to many male officers (Tait 2008, 85). Tait cites Pollock's suggestion of a "broad difference that can be defined as a *masculine authoritarian approach* and a *feminine personal or caring approach*." (2008, 69; emphasis in the original.) I am not, therefore, working from a position of biological determinism. Indeed, Tait (2008, 69-70) cites research which suggests that institutional sexism rather than gender role differences seems to account for different role fulfilment between men and women. I have found that certain styles of engagement with female and male prisoners are available to women chaplains based on perceptions of gender and role, but I have also found a significant incidence of sexist conduct ranging from low level innuendo to verbal harassment. My data, though, do not support any causal link between the two sets of findings so that the research cited by Tait appears not to hold good for women chaplains in the

prison context although there may be a low level of institutional sexism imported from the Anglican church.

Bagilhole's papers (2003 & 2006) illuminate the harassment, both overt and implicit, which some women chaplains have experienced. She frames her discussion within considerations of structure, culture and action and explores them as they impact upon the institution itself as well as upon the women themselves (Bagilhole 2003, 374). However, I suggest that not all she says of women clergy who encounter the "gender subculture" (2006, 1) is applicable to women chaplains in HMPS. She writes of "structural disadvantage and cultural hostility" citing pay policy, promotion practice and working hours as structural barriers in the Church. As one respondent, Harriet, notes, the published and enforced policies of HMPS appear to remove these barriers; at the same time, there is no obvious career progression for chaplains of either gender in HMPS. In this sense, clergy who join HMPS are opting out of the more developed career ladder of the COE in return, intentionally or not, for civil service terms and conditions of employment. That said, three of the eight area chaplains in 1996 were women while the two most recent chaplaincy training officers are women. This could be thought to be consistent with the appointment of more women governors to male prisons. To enshrine equal opportunities in institutional policy is not, however, to eradicate or weaken cultural hostility and its potential to inhibit a full expression of work and ministry. Some of the respondents cited below experienced such hostility; other women leaders and managers in HMPS have encountered similar opposition and the clerical collar has not shielded some women chaplains from similarly gendered opposition although it may well have muted it in some degree. It seems to be truer for some women chaplains than others that "gender relations are continually enacted within organisational culture." (Bagilhole 2006, 8)

It should be said that all the women respondents emphasised positive aspects of working with male colleagues and even in several cases an apparent acceptance of the prevailing culture. This is consistent with Tait's finding that women officers developed strategies for dealing with

harassment: “Sexist and sexual banter was accepted as part of the job, unlikely to change and something to adapt to rather than resist.” (2008, 75) This, though, does not include the perceptions of women who cannot adapt to such a working environment, a point made by another respondent, Heather: “I am sure there are women that don’t stay for all sorts of reasons but I think that some just aren’t prepared to put up with that kind of culture and I don’t think that institutionally it has been tackled at all.”

I discussed gender with 12 respondents, 8 of them female. Such issues are significant in the daily lives of some chaplains, but not all. My research shows higher gender consciousness in male chaplains working in female establishments, manifested in a concern for maintaining proper physical boundaries and a respect for the privacy needs of women of the kind mentioned by Carlen’s respondents (1998, 138-145). I detected no parallel anxiety amongst female chaplains who work in male prisons. Female chaplains in female prisons also articulate an awareness of gender, possibly because the women’s estate is so much smaller than the male estate, producing a heightened awareness of difference; indeed, the women’s estate as a discrete sector ceased in 2007. The official discourse of the Prison Service and many commentators assumes male prisoners, or is perceived to do so by some women chaplains; at meetings and conferences which I attended, discussion was exclusively grounded in data from men’s prisons. The cessation of the women’s estate as a separate sector meant that meetings of chaplains in women’s prisons were severely curtailed and the two posts of area chaplain to women’s prisons disappeared. Since women account for only 5% of the prison population there is a degree of inevitability about this. Male chaplains working in male prisons – with the exception of Roger (8.5.5) - seem not to be aware of gender in the way that female chaplains in women’s prisons are, possibly echoing the acceptance of chaplains and their pastoral role in other predominantly male situations such as the armed forces, single sex schools, and even football clubs. Cowburn suggests a hegemonic form of masculinity: “Although prison culture is not homogeneous and cultures can

vary across establishments ..... it is this masculinity that appears to dominate male prisons.” (Cowburn 1998, 235-236)

### **7.3 Gender, embodiment and perceived prison service culture.**

Female chaplains associated gender with other issues whilst for male respondents the issue was more clearly bounded by considerations of physicality. At one end of a spectrum of perceptions this awareness for Harriet (chaplain in a male establishment) was expressed in her reference to the Prison Service as an equal opportunities employer:

Compared with the Church we work in an organisation where the employer sees us as the same as the men..... looking at the prison service as opposed to the chaplaincy side of it, the women generally can pretty much go as far as men, can't they?

She acknowledges androcentric assumptions which underpin the working of HMPS but seems to experience them as enablers rather than disqualifiers, in contrast to the COE which limits the extent of women's career aspirations.

An opposing perspective is expressed in Heather's weariness and exasperation with what she sees as local and institutional sexism in prisons: "Of all the strands of diversity in the prison service I think that gender is the one that hasn't been tackled at all..... I really don't think the Prison Service has actually tackled it at all, sexism."

Apart from these twice reinforced assertions, Heather speaks of a prison officer repeatedly asking her if she wanted a body search, a form of harassment similar to that noted by Cowburn (1998, 241). Sexual harassment was also apparent when a chaplaincy colleague, a member of Forward in Faith, which rejects the priesthood of women (Sani & Reicher 2000), asked her on several occasions, "Can I go through your drawers?" to get his cigarettes. This again echoes Cowburn (1998, 242) who comments: "The majority of these behaviours are acts designed to embarrass, intimidate and denigrate the female worker by sexually objectifying her." It also echoes Martin's observations (1996, 511) about the power/control discourse which, in this case, is not apparently linked to any misogynistic element in Prison Service culture so much as to issues of gender and authority within the

Anglican church, so that sexual objectification is linked with an implicit rejection of the validity of Heather's clerical orders. There is also an issue of embodiment in that male priesthood is of necessity an embodiment defined by its maleness; for this harasser, then, Heather embodies a physical and theological anomaly which he resolves by denigrating the same physical characteristics.

Cassell (1998,99) makes the same point in relation to female surgeons in the USA: her words are possibly even more pertinent to women priests than to women surgeons since, for anglo-catholic clergy, the priest stands in the place of Christ and mediates his body and blood with the words, "This is my body, do this in remembrance of me." Harassment such as Heather perceived denies the validity of her orders and implies an embodied inferiority not only socially but within a specific divine model of creation. Whilst the Anglican churches in England allow for practice based on gender discrimination, the Prison Service does not: had Heather chosen to report the behaviour the colleague would have been dismissed, not only for the sexual harassment but for the discrimination implied by it.

She tells two stories of attempts to kiss her by two more senior chaplains. For her, there appears to be at least a partial association between authority (more senior chaplains in this case) and sexism so that gender and status issues are bound up together:

But it feels like, particularly those again who are in authority, that at that point you are thoroughly slapped down and actually you are really; you have no right to have an opinion or object to anything and who are you to think what way somebody should or shouldn't touch you? I think there is a large element of that around, definitely.

Elsewhere Heather acknowledges that she has not experienced actual physical harassment but the forcefulness of her expression was unique on this subject although her experience was not. She has worked in both male and female prisons; her responses have much to say about her perception of sexism in male prisons but little about her experience in women's prisons apart from the lack of sexist innuendo as a model of how working in a prison

could be. Offered the opportunity by her female line manager to formalize her objections Heather declined,

At which point I thought no, you are saying, “Why do you feel so strongly about this?” and not actually accepting or hearing what I am saying and I will be writing you something that you are never going to read and it is never going to go anywhere.

Heather thinks that her manager has absorbed the values of a milieu where abuse and harassment are accepted and unremarked to the extent that she would not act on the report. Cowburn notes a similarly fatalistic attitude amongst female prison officers and prison based probation officers: “Where workers realised that there was an issue that needed addressing at a policy level, there was a degree of pessimism or fatalism that the overall culture of the prison was not amenable to change.” (Cowburn 1998, 244)

Cowburn’s respondents recounted a wider range of harassment than mine admitted to me and Heather explains that she had not experienced physical abuse; nevertheless, her discouraged response is consistent with the earlier research.

Other female chaplains acknowledged a male (and subliminally violent) culture across the Service, typified by swearing and for some, though not for all, by sexist remarks. Alexandra, chaplain in a male local prison, echoes Cowburn’s (1998, 243) and Tait’s respondents (2008, 75), recognizing this almost as an inevitability:

I think that you do have to be (part of the culture of the place) to a certain extent as prison chaplain, I mean if you don’t become part of it then you are not going to, you are not going to be accepted. I mean I know that there is no way that I am going to be part of it in lots of ways. I mean, most of the officers are men and so you are out of that for a start. **Out of what?** Well I am not a man so... **Yes I know but...** Well I can’t be in that kind of ..... because I am not like that anyway; it is not my way of going about it. I mean I think yes, if you wear a collar round your neck that puts you another step away from normality doesn’t it, really, most of the time anyhow; they are testing you out to see whether you mind them swearing in front of you or whatever it happens to be. **And do you?** Well, no not really, I mean I don’t swear in front of them but no, it is part of the culture of the Prison Service I think.

Elsewhere Alexandra articulated her reflections more cogently and coherently than many respondents: here, however, she seems less assured of her identity both as woman and chaplain in a largely male establishment, foreshadowing Imogen's apparent anxieties and uncertainties (this section). She suggests that it is possible to exist in the institution without becoming enculturated. Her words imply a distance which arises from factors, of which gender is one ("Well I am not a man") in association with her status as chaplain ("another step away from normality"), and her own personal values of conduct ("I am not like that anyway"). Alexandra defines an identity, rooted not only in her gender, over against what she sees as a pervasive and potentially threatening majority culture. This detachment from elements of the mainstream culture of the prison and, possibly, from the more formal structures is expressed in her choosing to wear a black clerical shirt whilst working. Whilst this choice might have clearer semiotic significance in a male chaplain, suggesting high church affiliation, for Alexandra "it is a neutral uniform that, you know, doesn't say that I am male, female or anything else, it says that I am a priest of the Church of England." The clerical shirt becomes, then, a marker of gender neutrality but in the context of a largely uniformed environment it becomes a uniform different from the others and might be thought of as a token of difference or separation.

Barbara, who, like Alexandra, is chaplain in a male prison, also sees dress as having the potential for gender neutrality: "I would always, I think, cover up from my neck to my ankles....just because I feel happier like that and I think it is easier for the men." She is also ready to extend the principle as a requirement to other chaplains in her team: "I wouldn't have anybody with inappropriate dress." She adds wryly and laughing, "Fortunately I am old enough now so I can say that." I teased Barbara about being an authoritarian after she spoke of ordering a Roman Catholic colleague to refine his pastoral skills: "and I did say to him you will be going on training to the hospice." Any impression of an authoritarian style of leadership was dispelled, however, when I sat in on the weekly chaplaincy team meeting, held in a neutral space,

where Barbara's style of co-ordination enabled every member to contribute on an equal basis.

Imogen also sees an association between gender and role in prison officers' conduct towards women, although this does not preclude the possibility of engagement in amiable and effective working relations:

I don't have a problem with the prisoners..... As far as the officers go, I also don't, but I think that if I was, if I got upset easily, you know, because they will make remarks and things like that you know if I was very PC as it were or worried then I suppose I could get upset by some of the things that they say. But I just let it go over my head and... **Yes, can I ask what sort of things they do say?** Well you know it is like erm... **Not word for word obviously.** No I mean it is like erm I am trying to think now..... **A description would do.** Yes, I am just, well it is like oh, you know, the God squad and things like that and erm you know, "Are you allowed to have sex being a vicar?" type of thing. You know and those kind of things as a woman and unfortunately we had a female chaplain here who had a relationship with one of the inmates and that comes up as well. You know..... I..... and one thing that is very different as well, I will not go into an inmate's pad, I won't go into a cell unless I really know them and obviously I do, double lock the door and that, whereas the guys are more happy to go into somebody's pad and you know sit on their on the bed and have a conversation whereas I don't feel comfortable and I will take them out and go into another room. A, for my own safety obviously, but also I am very aware of prison officers and obviously because one chaplain has already been done for.... Erm... you know.... abusing her authority. I wouldn't want anybody putting any SIRs in about me. And that can be difficult because especially..... like I had one young guy who was on the SORI course and he had been abused as a child and he had also been a rent boy and he erm divulged this to me and there was issues that he had been abused by his step father, or his mum's boyfriend, and he wanted to tell his mum this. So I had spent quite a number of times talking to him and I felt quite vulnerable because obviously I couldn't share with the staff what I was talking about; however they kept saying, "Are you going to see him again?" And I didn't like that, you know; I used to log it and I used to tell our guys, "Look I am talking to him about this but he only wanted to talk to me," so of course he would ask for Imogen, he wouldn't ask for the other chaplains. So in that way it worked negatively because I thought the officers were thinking hmm, whereas they wouldn't probably bother quite so much if one of the guys spent a lot of time with one person. But I can understand why, you know at the end of the day it is all security and, you know, I made sure that I was sat in an office with a window so they could see me at all times and I would tell them that I was going in. So I met all the criteria but I over compensated because I am a woman. **Yes, there are instances**

**in other places..... where women staff and not necessarily chaplains find that the male staff have left sort of page 3 of the paper open deliberately or comments are made, so you have experienced that sort of thing as well?** Yes, yes. OK. But I will make not a joke out of it, but I will just say, "It is a shame that you need to read that, I would have thought you would have been more intelligent than that," you know rather than reading *The Sun* or is that *The Sport*, you know kind of tongue in cheek but get my point over. And I do have a good rapport with most of the officers.... although I have got a few officers that have turned round and said, "What is the point of flipping chaplaincy?" But I did the Faith Awareness training yesterday for the first time. First time it has been run and it was excellent, really, really positive and all the officers that came on it said that they really enjoyed it and so that was good.

Imogen ends this section of the dialogue emphasising the effectiveness of her working relationship with "most of the officers" and that only "a few have turned round and said, what is the point of flipping chaplaincy?" This is a qualified assertion and it may well be that her use of "flipping" is a euphemistic substitution for "fucking". The same reservations are evident earlier in this section, the pause in the first line of the extract suggesting a "but", leading her into a more hesitant narrative. "if I was very PC..... I suppose I could get upset...but I just let it...." In this reflective mode Imogen appears to rationalize her technique of responding to verbal harassment and its substratum of contempt and violence. When I ask for verbatim examples she becomes uncomfortable and seems uncertain about whether or how to frame the comments which had been made to her ("it's like erm...I'm trying to think now..) and seems to make an appeal to shared knowledge and culture ("Well, you know, it is like erm.....") Because of her unease I invite her to generalize but this initially invokes a response which has more to do with contesting the status of chaplains and mention of, after a hesitation, comments around whether she has sex or not. She is the more vulnerable to comment because "unfortunately we had a female chaplain here who had a relationship with one of the inmates". Tait (2008,80) acknowledges the extra scrutiny of female staff by male officers which such occurrences cause, rare though they are. The implied assault is upon Imogen both as woman and as chaplain; she is vulnerable both in her personal and professional

relationships. Her narrative becomes story when she recounts her work with “one young guy” who had, in strict confidence, disclosed childhood abuse. Here Imogen seems to be the “young guy’s” surrogate mother, (“he wanted to tell his mother this”), a role similar to that experienced by both Esther and Claudia in response to the disclosure of abuse. Since Imogen could not share what the “young guy” had told her, staff speculated openly about her relationship with him to the extent that “I didn’t like that... I used to log it.” Despite her understanding of officers’ suspicions “it worked negatively” because the suspicions were gender based and determined the level of her response to the prisoner’s needs; she ends by reflecting that her actions were essentially gendered by cultural context: “I met all the criteria but I overcompensated because I am a woman.”

Having talked through these issues Imogen is now able to offer, only partly prompted, her reaction to the implicit insult caused by the display of tabloid page 3 photographs apparently left open for her to see. The seriousness she perceives in it lies behind her principled assertion, “But I will not make a joke out of it.” She ends, however, with a strong affirmation of her relationship, as chaplain, with staff, even some who had previously been sceptical, through the delivery of a Prison Service staff training course. Even so, the beginning of the extract suggests that relations with staff can be more problematic than with prisoners, an observation made also by Heather.

Inevitably, perhaps, the attitude of female chaplains to the language of what is perceived to be predominantly a male culture varies. In contrast to Heather’s passionate objections to sexual innuendo is Jeannette’s amusement about swearing and the (possibly ironic) reluctance of some staff to swear in front of the chaplain:

I don’t embarrass very easily. I’ve sold condom machines, you know? Actually I never sold one; I had them on my list but I never managed to shift one, not for want of trying. Actually what I find is that staff tell some story or they’ll be effing and blinding and they’ll go “Oops, sorry, sorry.” And I say, “What are you saying sorry for?” And they say, “I wouldn’t have said that if I’d known you were there.” And I always say the same thing: “Ah, I live in hope of hearing something I’ve never heard before.” Yesterday, one of the governors, he was going to tell

this story, joke “But I can’t tell it with you here in the room.” “Oh, why ever not?” “No,” he said, “I wouldn’t be comfortable because it’s got swearing in it.” I said, “You should go and spend some time in a vestry,” (*laughter*) but I find that quite charming in its nod towards respect.

It is not clear from this whether the embarrassment of officers and governor arose from Jeannette’s status as chaplain, her gender or both. She herself is apparently possessed of a broad sense of humour and is not in the least embarrassed by the language or the prospect of a risqué story; she was, though, moved to tears when telling me about prisoners’ prayers. Like Martin’s respondents (1996,518) and others of mine, Jeannette accepts the nature of the culture in male prisons. Nevertheless, the assumed, possibly affected, propriety of “one of the governors”, who makes it clear that there is a joke which he will not tell in front of her, has the effect of excluding her from the group and stressing its essential maleness.

Penny relates a similar situation to Imogen’s where the scrutiny implied by staff comments is communicated through apparent humour:

I’ve just been working in a team where I was the only woman and all the men [officers] kept saying, “Mr X is asking for you, Penny. Mr X, he’s your favourite; Mr X will only talk to you.” And it got quite, quite tricky and I just felt that...um... it was either like having their older sister or their granny there so there was quite a lot of that in the confidentiality but it was like sensible practical advice and the male chaplains – some of them – were quite frightened to go on to the wings....

In this case, however, Penny, who is chaplain in a high security prison, recognises that the officers’ comments can be perceived as cautionary, that the constraints upon her contact with male prisoners arise from the dynamics, actual and potential, of a lone woman working one to one with category A prisoners, rather than from what Imogen perceives more as tale bearing. This contrasts with Imogen’s experience in a lower category prison where the perceived physical risk is lower and staff are readier to engage with prisoners on the wing. Penny here presents herself as consciously outperforming her male colleagues, (7.2) projecting a version of what she

thinks male behaviour should be, in the context of a high risk of assault or abduction, but isn't because they were, "quite frightened to go on the wings"). These three responses could be seen as differing perceptions and awareness of boundaries in which the sharpest contrast is between Heather and Jeannette.

As it is for female officers (Tait 2008, 75), so gender sensitivity is problematic in differing degrees for female chaplains who work alongside male staff in male prisons. For some, it is a source of serious offence whilst for others it can be, if not an area of indulgence, at least a source of amusement and gentle admonition. It is possible to see this as both a formative and resultant feature of relations between female chaplains and male staff in male prisons; while there is no suggestion that a majority or even a large minority of male prison officers offer gender based challenges to them, nevertheless it is an issue of which a number of the chaplains are aware and around which they are consciously strategic. No such issues were mentioned by chaplains, male or female, working in female prisons. The extent to which women chaplains can exercise a ministry in male prisons seems to be determined, at least in part, by the relations they are able to establish with male staff. I encountered no misgivings of the kind found by Hicks (2012, 659).

In at least one instance a female chaplain, Pauline, began at a disadvantage and associates staff scepticism about her ability and inexperience with her own denigrated female embodiment:

I absolutely take on board that people saw me as a short and dumpy female who didn't have a clue as to how the system worked.... and who could be taken very easily for a ride. People just thought that, "She won't last more than six months."

Pauline thinks that "They were judging me not as a priest but as someone who would be incapable in this environment" and that "it was much more to do with femaleness than 'female in the church-ness'." Pauline asserts that this stage has been passed but her words are a reminder that ordained female chaplains can be the objects of gender prejudice in both the Prison Service (informally) as well as in the Church, where women are ineligible to

serve as bishops and their ministry can be legitimately rejected on grounds of “conscience and with deeply held beliefs based in scripture and tradition.” (Bagilhole 2003, 373) I refer elsewhere to Pauline’s dysfunctional relationship with a previous line manager (5.4) but I should note here her comment that, “I have never had a female line manager.” Heather’s experience seems to be that the gender of the manager does not necessarily make a difference.

A similar point is made in relation to the Church by Juliet:

As an NSM (non stipendiary minister) I was attached to a parish which opposed the ordination of women. Neither NSMs nor chaplains are owned by the Church. I thought when I came into this job from being an NSM that the Church would take more notice, but they didn’t. It’s easy for chaplains to develop a chip on their shoulder. I cannot celebrate in my home parish because they don’t approve of women priests so when we had a party to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women’s ordination it was sort of under cover of darkness.

Juliet’s comments suggest a degree of ghettoization among some women clergy where both a mode of ministry and the person exercising it are rejected and ignored. A sense of distance from mainstream church structures, however, was acknowledged by male and female chaplains alike. (9.2; 10.2)

#### **7.4 Gendered cross-postings and ministry to prisoners.**

The previous section examined working relations between female chaplains and male staff. Chaplains’ principal ministry, however, is to prisoners and some of the tensions revealed in the previous section arise from that relationship, the way it is perceived by male staff and the way in which those perceptions are acted upon. Some women chaplains (Heather and Imogen), however, expressed greater ease working with prisoners than with staff. Nevertheless, there are real constraints for chaplains working in an establishment of the other gender, as Penny and Imogen recognise; one or two women chaplains, however, hint at a ministry which is available to women but not to men in both male and female prisons. Esther’s story is explicit:

I mean the thing that you do get occasionally is people fall on your neck and burst into tears because I had a bloke who did that, and he was on reception and he was unusually, I think that he was probably principal carer for his little boy of 2 or 2½, and the previous night had been the first night that he had spent apart from him. And he was a big tough looking bloke with the vest and muscles you know, close cropped hair and all the rest of it, and I was in his cell with, obviously, the door open, but I was in his cell and so I suppose in a way it's a little moment of sort of private space and he started telling me and he just fell on my neck. And he cried on my shoulder because I was a woman and he could do that; there was nobody else he could have done it to. He wasn't going to go and tell any of the male officers, I mean what do you do, you can't say, "Oh, get off."

Esther seems to echo Penny's reference to substitute older sister or granny status,(7.3) a ministry of controlled intimacy involving physical contact and unavailable to men. In another account, which is narrative rather than complete story, she demonstrates the co-operation between her and a senior officer:

I remember the last evening I was at Seaport before I went to Whitchurch, one of the S[enior] O[fficer]s wanted me to go and see a bloke, tidy bloke with neat short hair, clean shaven and all the rest of it, and as he started talking to me he burst into tears but fortunately the SO had parked us in his own office as he sensed there was something wrong and the guy started talking about being abused when he was a child.

In both vignettes Esther stresses the prisoners' gender with reference to their physical characteristics ("big tough looking bloke ... vest and muscles... close cropped hair", "short hair, clean shaven"). The SO in the second account seems to have responded both to the prisoner's need and the female chaplain's situation, possibly recognising that the prisoner needed a safe space in which he could temporarily suspend his conformity to the hegemonic masculine stereotype in which men are in control and invulnerable, and reveal his distress (Newburn & Stanko 1994, 161). The unmistakably gendered self-presentation of both men can be temporarily abandoned in the privacy of a cell and in the company of a woman whose presence as chaplain, may be perceived both as an extension of chapel space and as female familial surrogate. Toch (1992, 189) draws attention to the risks of being perceived as a potential victim. Both of Esther's accounts might

also be used in considering the location and nature of safe and sacred places in prisons as well staff's perceptions of a chaplain's function.

Esther also recounts an analogous experience concerning a male chaplain in a women's prison:

Theo had to go and tell someone that their mother had died. He was upstairs on E wing and obviously he did the usual thing; he stopped off at the wing office and one of the women staff came up with him and he went in and he told the woman, broke the news. And she went straight out of the cell, outside on the landing. There was the officer and she went straight into her arms.

This is not to suggest undue constraint upon chaplains operating across the gender divide so much as to recognize gender based boundaries and the circumstances in which those boundaries may be crossed rather than transgressed. In this instance the function of prison officer was overlaid by gender identity and the officer supplied physical response which the male chaplain could not.

For Ronald same sex relationships were a source of acute embarrassment when he accidentally encountered women sharing a bed during the day, although he learnt to recognize the reality of it and had been prepared for it during training. He identified it as a major difference between ministry in a parish and a women's prison:

It certainly challenged my theological view of things because having come from a parish where, certainly the parish I worked in, I didn't get that sort of thing at all, not up front anyway, and suddenly being confronted with it up front and having to deal with all this, it was quite a challenge, initially. But as time went on as I thought it through and I talked it through with my colleagues and my spiritual director, I found a way of being able to deal with it. (See also 8.5)

Although Ronald seemed ill at ease recounting this, he had come to see it as a growth point in his perception of people and in the application of his theology. The recollection also suggests a reappraisal of his former parishioners' lives ("not up front anyway") and of his former ministry.

## 7.5 Chaplains and a ministry of touch

Prison Service orders effectively formalise the ways and circumstances in which staff will make physical contact with prisoners. These relate to body searching and techniques of control and restraint, neither of which involve chaplains (although I have personal experience of C and R training) and the prescriptive, ritualized nature of physical contact between staff and prisoners.

Some respondents reflected on touching as a boundary; Esther mentioned the man who cried on her shoulder and the pastoral impossibility of asking him not to. She and Claudia agreed that touch was more likely to occur as a part of a pastoral ministry to women:

The other thing that I think about working with women, it feels quite important at Northanger, is the amount of physical contact we allow ourselves with the residents, which I know would be absolutely inappropriate (in a male prison), whether you are a male or a female..... the male members of our team are very much more careful and rightly so, but in terms of female chaplains and women, you know, I can't think of many relatively important pastoral encounters that don't end in a hug.

Claudia makes a sharp distinction between an apparently more tactile and intuitive aspect of women's ministry to women and any other gender combination, implying an exclusivity to the woman to woman ministry. No respondents, however, suggested the implied corollary of this, that a male ministry to women was somehow deficient.

Incidences of innocent touch in the course of pastoral ministry are starkly counter cultural in a social context where touch is formalized, even ritualized, in body searches and control and restraint procedures. Such institutionalization of touch both emphasises and symbolises the deprivation of affection and intimacy for prisoners. It could be thought that such instances of touch as occur reinforce the perception of the chaplain as a surrogate parent or grandparent.

## 7.6 Women's ministry to women

Some female respondents (Penny, Claudia, Esther) stressed the fulfillment they had experienced through working with women prisoners after a cross gendered posting, yet for two of them at least their first experience of the women's estate after the male estate had been a shock:

The women's prison where I worked had a mother and baby unit so that made things very different and also there were pregnant women there so that made quite a lot of difference. The women fought, they fought, they really did fight and they barricaded a lot and they were loud and nasty, nasty to each other, were nasty to male staff, made sexual innuendos, just awful. But I had some of my best times in ministry in that women's prison, a real sense of community, very different and very, very happy and joyous occasions in there as well, baptisms and a real sense of joy in their worship. There were no inhibitions and you were almost on a level as another woman even though you were a member of staff, so they would confide much easier and they used the chaplaincy an awful lot. They were very needy in there in what they came with – a lot of abuse – that was quite difficult to manage really and to get into some kind of proportion.

The repetitions, lexical and structural, of the second sentence seem to recreate Penny's sense of physical shock, though this is balanced by the preceding mention of pregnancy and the mother and baby unit. On the other hand Penny is able to appreciate and involve herself in the women's situation, both as woman and as staff member ("my best times", "a real sense of community", "on a level as another woman"). She also balances the women's violent conduct, verbal and physical, with recognition of their needs and a hint of the emotional demands which these made upon her. A similar sense of violent impact emerges from Esther's early experience of a women's prison after a male Cat A prison:

I remember when I first arrived being very conscious, and it wasn't even an intellectual thing, just a feeling inside of being in a very different place from the male prison, the whole feel, the whole atmosphere was really very, very different and felt in a way that I don't think that I can quantify at all but felt incredibly female. Erm.... and it was, it felt.... I mean the prison has changed a lot since then but I remember it felt sort of loud and raucous and I felt curiously threatened in a way that I hadn't when I was at Seaport, which considering that Seaport was a Cat A local was an interesting sort of

observation I suppose. I certainly felt that the women were very much more in your face, were much more obviously more needy.

Both Penny and Esther (“loud and raucous.... curiously threatened”) initially perceive a degree of physical threat which they had not experienced in the male estate and which they seem not to have anticipated. Further into their ministry, however, both are able to articulate the satisfaction and enjoyment they derive from it as well as an empathic sense of involvement and an urge to affirm the prisoners as decision making individuals, as exemplified in co-designing personal rituals and liturgy. This is paralleled by a sharp awareness of the women’s needs and the experience of abuse which many of them take to prison.

### **7.7 Chaplains’ gendered emotional responses**

Female and male chaplains agree about the greater emotional intensity of ministry in women’s prisons. Dennis has experienced ministry in male and female prisons; like many male (and, indeed, female) prison staff he did not welcome the prospect of working with women prisoners and his “terrified” preconceptions echo Esther’s initial experience:

I said I would never ever work with women, OK, anyone but women you know. They re-rolled (prison name) [change from male to female] and I was terrified. It was brilliant. So much so that I found it difficult to work with the men when we re-rolled back, which is one of the reasons why I went to (prison name), to work with women again. The men that were turning up in a category C prison I realised most of the problems that the female prisoners had were caused by these men and I couldn’t differentiate; it was very difficult to minister in that situation.

Dennis’s involvement with women prisoners had been powerful and revelatory to the point where he approaches identification with them in locating generic male prisoners as perpetrators of abuse against the women. The realization is ironic in that, having anticipated a difficult ministry to women, he finds that his ministry to men has become more problematic.

Gervase also has experience of ministry to both men and women in prison:

I think working in a women’s prison is far more intense. It’s stereotyping isn’t it, but women tend to be much more aware of their

feelings. They want to sit down and talk about stuff whereas men don't often deal with things like that. I think that men tend only to want to engage with somebody else about problems and issues that they have when things have come to crisis point. First of all they don't deal with it by sitting round talking about it; they deal with it by taking out their aggression on somebody or something. I think women tend to be a bit more astute about their feelings or emotions.

Whilst Gervase acknowledges that his opinion may be over-generalised ("stereotyping") he is able to analyse his experience to differentiate between engagement with women and men. He contrasts the violent conventions of a male prison, where feelings have to be suppressed until they erupt, with the more symmetrical relationship he had been able to engage in with women prisoners in his previous prison, a "far more intense" involvement. His view, however, is implicitly gendered since he speaks as a male chaplain in a male prison; his model of ministry to men is contested by the accounts of Imogen and Esther which indicate that a woman chaplain can act almost as surrogate mother/ grandmother/elder sister.

Ronald, similarly experienced in both estates, broadly agrees with the view expressed by Gervase:

I think.... the whole area of working with emotions[ is] a very big part of your ministry in a women's prison and here it's hidden, on the whole. Having said that, there are times when emotions do come up to the front but when they do they're much quicker, it's just dealt with for the moment and it's gone, whereas in the women's sector it would linger and linger and linger, both the positive and the negative emotions..... certainly in the women's sector ACCT support was a far greater proportion than it is in the men's estate and a lot of that is coping with emotional issues and the pastoral support that goes with it but yes, the various pastoral ministries that you do, prayer support, being in the chapel, lighting a candle, are much more evident in a women's prison than in a men's prison.

Ronald, although seemingly more detached (possibly because of the interview location in the staff mess and its insertion into an already busy schedule), points out the greater need for suicide and self-harm support in women's prisons and hints at the possible emotional demands upon chaplains ("linger and linger and linger") though neither he nor the majority of other chaplains expand upon ministry to potential suicides. (During my

visit to Ronald I became actively involved in a suicide/self harm review, having revealed that I had previously been a staff trainer in the field.) He does, however, mention in retrospect specific aspects of practical ministry which Esther expands upon as elements of her current ministry.

Esther explains something of the pastoral and social background to candle lighting (6.6.1). She perceives candle lighting as “part of the culture”, “one of their rituals” emphasizing that this is part of prisoners’ rather than institutional culture and something which is largely, if not exclusively, female. She shows how the act of candle lighting is, in the broadest sense, a faith-neutral activity with religious implications. The quality of the dialogue, as reported, is significant in that the woman is encouraged to co-operate in the act, to personalize it, so that it becomes unique to her and is her, rather than the chaplain’s or the prison’s occasion. The individuation and mutuality between chaplain and prisoner which this implies has counter cultural overtones to the extent that it stands in contrast to the depersonalizing and authoritarian rituals of prison. The question is not whether this is exclusive to women’s prisons and women chaplains – it isn’t - but rather whether it is more a part of a “feminine” ministry and is more closely woven into the fabric of a woman’s ministry to other women.

## **7.8 Sexism and harassment**

My data indicate that actual harassment, as experienced by Heather, is fairly rare, with no reported incidence of physical harassment. Penny raises the possibility that sexism is as likely to be found in the Church as in the Prison Service and Heather’s responses confirm this. It is clear, though, that female chaplains (such as Imogen and Alexandra) perceive a strain of innuendo which might be construed as testing in the same way that all new staff are tested; on the other hand, they can, like Jeannette, be treated with heavy chivalry which effectively and publicly separates them from the predominant culture if it does not actually exclude them. Two respondents (Penny and Imogen) indicate a raised level of surveillance of their activity by male staff. Whilst this can be perceived as threatening and constraining (Imogen seems to suggest an element of prurience) it can also be seen (as by Penny) as

authentic concern for the safety and reputation of a female chaplain, though no less intrusive. Esther's account of interviewing a young victim of abuse, however, shows that these tensions can be managed in a structured way by male middle managers for the protection of each party involved.

### **7.9 Familial surrogacy and disclosure of abuse**

The data reveal that a number of women chaplains working in male prisons have received disclosure of abuse experienced by prisoners; male chaplains have not reported this. Esther recounts a young man's distress as he revealed the abuse which he had suffered and Imogen links a similar episode with the man's desire to tell his mother. Other respondents have commented on the quasi-familial role of the female chaplain in relation not only to female prisoners but to male prisoners also. If this is a plausible theory it suggests that a female chaplain can and does exercise a secular pastoral ministry in a way which male chaplains apparently do not or do not mention. In matters of childhood sexual abuse it seems that women chaplains offer a safe space for disclosure to both male and female prisoners. There are no data which link this with Anglican affiliation but the question needs to be asked as to whether it might be connected with a broad ontological presence (comparable with that of a parish priest) as opposed to the more circumscribed ministry of other denominations and faiths.

## **PART 3 FINDINGS (ii)**

### **CHAPTER 8**

#### **THE AMBIVALENCE OF PRISON PERCEIVED AS PARISH**

8.1	Prison and /or parish	188
8.2	A pastoral imperative	192
8.3	“A serious house on serious earth”	194
8.4	Prisoners as parishioners	196
8.5	“A bit different to parish life”	198
8.6	“A resource when people need it.”	201

The ambivalence arises because most respondents manifested a positive choice for prison ministry over parish ministry, yet seventeen of them spoke about their prison ministry in parish terms. Statements from the COE, however, suggest that the parish is no longer thought adequate as a sole base for ministry (COE 2004, xi), recognizing that there are (still!) “non-churched groups of people and cultures with little or no connection with the gospel or with church.” The groups identified as benefitting from small group church “contexts” include “where there is a bad image of church to live down, those with addiction problems...where young disciples need peer group accountability.”(2004,111) These might be thought features of the prison population yet the book nowhere mentions prisons, or chaplaincy as a form of *Mission- shaped Church*, (2004) the book’s title.

#### **8.1 Prison and/or parish**

Whilst respondents articulated their anglicanness in different ways, a significant proportion manifested it in their adherence to a vicarious, universalist (as Alexandra termed it) concept of ministry. Even when they felt themselves to be far from diocesan structures and office holders, and however much they valued their co-operation with colleagues of other faiths, a majority recurred to a deeply Anglican reading of the relationship between

priests of the established church and the total community in which they minister. Anglican models of ministry were variously seen as inappropriate for 21<sup>st</sup> century prisons by Beckford and Gilliat (1998, 32), by Noblett (1999 & 2000); subsequently Chaplaincy headquarters was restructured and chaplains' job descriptions were revised along generic lines. My data show, however, that an overarching concept of Anglican parish ministry is still widely held and practised. This is not a surprise; in 2010 there were only 40 non-Anglican co-ordinating chaplains and there were approximately 100 Anglicans in the role (Todd & Tipton 2011,20). Amongst the respondents in this study the parallels with parish ministry were drawn by co-ordinators and non-co-ordinators alike, leaving open the possibility of tension within chaplaincy teams. For Cedric, the similarities were twofold:

You carry the bishop's licence..... if you were in a parish, effectively as an incumbent, the bishop would be expecting you to conduct a service of worship every Sunday morning in your church and that's what being ordained is about and the prison is, in my view, the parish.

The bishop's licence is seen by Cedric as the common denominator between parish and prison ministry, laying the same obligations and expectations upon each. For Cedric the licence and the 1952 Act, something to which other chaplains are not formally and legally subject, put the Anglican chaplain under the same discipline as all other diocesan clergy. Indeed, Anglican prison chaplains are the only clergy whose obligations are defined by Act of Parliament. (Military chaplains are governed by Queen's Regulations, which have statutory force, and health care chaplains in Wales and Scotland by ministerial directive.) Cedric here is referring to the bishop's licence as an instrument of enforcement against those chaplains who are "the sort of Anglicans who feel it's perfectly acceptable to have eighteen Sundays a year off." This may include the chaplain, cited by Cedric, whose "wife doesn't like me working on Sundays." In effect, Cedric, as a regional chaplain, is asserting the legal expectations of both Church and state, serving both institutions simultaneously and using parish expectation as a criterion for the prison.

For Cedric as chaplain in his own prison:

The big advantage of being in the prison is that I don't have any churchyards to worry about basically or a PCC. So I feel that the components in my ministry are virtually the same as the parish but the way in which I do that..... is necessarily conditioned by the environment in which I find myself.

If the bishop's licence is a potential means of aligning ministry in parish and in prison, it also allows for liberation from features of church governance at local parish level and concerns about fabric. Cedric, who manifests a somewhat jaded view of parish ministry (churchyards and PCC), seems to suggest that, while he acts very much like a parish priest, he is necessarily "conditioned by the environment in which I find myself", making him one of the few respondents to allude directly to the space in which ministry is conducted. His response prompts a question about whether he and other chaplains are able to accept the exigencies of prison "admin" when freed from the needs of fabric and the legitimate input of laity, whether they are more "at home" in a closely bounded secular institution. A focus group member of several years' experience observed that "in my experience the administration of being a co-ordinating chaplain is considerably less than it is being the incumbent of a large Anglican parish if it is a training parish." Others in the group concurred, adding that, "The big advantage is that when you have gone home, by and large, you have gone home" and "When I was in a parish I was always in my study at midnight, catching up on something." This suggests that these respondents appreciate the boundedness of chaplaincy as against the unrestricted availability implicit in parish models of ministry.

The awareness of different modes of involvement is evident in Ben's responses when he talks of more professionalised clergy in the Episcopal Church of the United States keeping office hours and living outside their parish. He perceives them to be, "a much happier breed than their Anglican counterparts in this country where you find some poor sod struggling to try and maintain rectory life in a goldfish bowl."

Ben turns the notion of imprisonment on its head by portraying life as a parish priest as a kind of incarceration where the incumbent is subject to constant surveillance. Like Cedric, he seems to find prison chaplaincy

liberating after parish ministry although he too adheres to a vicarious, universalist model of ministry. He raises residence as one of the essential differences between chaplaincy and parish ministry to the detriment of the latter: present day chaplains do not live on site as some earlier chaplains did. All the same he recognises points of similarity:

**I wonder whether you get a different view of people's spirituality, their religious belief, as a prison chaplain from what you got when you were working in parishes?** I don't think it is a different view because I would work in very much the same sort of mind set within the parishes. The difference is that it is very much more distilled when it is in prison; it is like an essential oil rather than a bottle of eau de cologne.....in the same way that any problems that people have when they are in prison, particularly the prisoners, are very much more urgent and immediate because they haven't got the ability and they haven't got the capability to try and sort things out.

Ben uses the language of need to articulate both the similarities and the differences between prison and parish ministry, introducing an image from secular spirituality which seems to distinguish between essential therapy and casual adornment. This recalls his "cynical" description of parishioners as "the terminally bored". Even so, despite his apparent disillusion with the diocese and his scepticism about parish ministry, he brings the COE values of universal availability and access to the multi faith context of a secular institution, both by inclination and with the tacit permission of other staff.

While Cedric and Ben are clear about at least some of the differences between parish and prison, Alexandra, who is not the co-ordinating chaplain in her prison and describes herself as "one of a bunch of chaplains", sees that the more individualist aspects of the parish role are not appropriate in a chaplaincy context: "I find it incredibly difficult not to minister to everybody, so I do it, but actually that is not team work really. In some ways it is not the expectation the others come in with."

She identifies an essential difference between ministry in prisons and parishes in terms of professional expectation and recognises more explicitly than Ben that her practice is deeply Anglican in its universalism, but at odds with the expectations and practice of other chaplains. She cites the co-

ordinating chaplain of her prison as an example: “he was going to look after Muslims, so he has had to broaden out and say, ‘Actually I am responsible for everybody.’ It is not natural to him to do that.”

Alexandra seems to suggest that the tension is worked through in practice but not resolved conceptually, in part because of what she sees as a COE reluctance to recognise that, as the Anglican chaplain, she is not in charge.

## **8.2 A pastoral imperative**

The availability of Anglican ministry to all people in all places is an attitude which emerges in the accounts of several respondents. Speaking of his time combining parish ministry with part time prison chaplaincy, George says:

I always worked on the basis that if I was there then I was available; if I was in the vicarage, then if the prison rang at whatever hour, day or night, it wasn't just a matter of, “Well, I am being paid to do this; I suppose I need to turn out.” There was a pastoral imperative about it, whether it was a parish need or a prison need and I never thought twice about it whereas now I know that that's only one view amongst others. If there is a need now for someone to be called in it is likely to be me who will be called in rather than the co-ordinating chaplain. He will simply say, “Well I will deal with it when I come in tomorrow,” because our view of...er... death and tragedy and...um... the pain that ensues from that and the support that we feel is needed by the recipient of bad news, is different from the view that is taken by other people.

George echoes Alexandra's (and other) reflections upon different faith ministries but his phrase “a pastoral imperative” is one which, in different ways and different words, nearly all respondents express. They seem to suggest that there is a residual need for generic pastoral ministry over against more specifically faith based ministry and that the Anglican chaplain is the only one equipped by training and values to exercise it. At least one chaplain, Dennis, outlines a classically Anglican perspective on prison ministry:

I have never escaped from being not just a prison chaplain or the prison chaplain, it's a bit arbitrary, but Dennis, who has the care of prisoners, visitors and staff - and it is not a denominational issue - whoever they are; if there is a Buddhist behind the cell door or in the office, then OK.

Dennis suggests that there is a pastoral ministry which transcends boundaries of faith and denomination. His assertion that “it is not a denominational issue” paradoxically indicates how completely Anglican his perspective is in its assumption of primacy and acceptability. This is not to suggest that he consciously over-rides or denigrates chaplains and lay people of other faiths, simply that he sees his own Anglican ministry as being ubiquitous in ways which others are not.

For a female focus group member, Anglican is nearly synonymous with flexible:

Anglicans have a tremendous part to play because we are the establishment, we are middle road, we are flexible to the nth and we kind of, I agree, can co-operate, I think, the most easily probably with everybody because we are so flexible.

The perspective is stated more clearly by Tom:

I believe that cure of souls is everybody in this place. Not only the prisoners, not only the Christian prisoners, not only the Anglican prisoners but also the Muslims, the Buddhist, having a general watch over their care, making sure that their spiritual, religious needs are responded to.

Tom may be referring to his role as co-ordinating chaplain and the only full time chaplain in his prison rather than to an Anglican “pastoral imperative” though the phrase “cure of souls” is the terminology of the COE ordination service. This would suggest that the co-ordinating chaplain’s job specification reflects its Anglican origins, if not direct provenance. Like Becci (2012, 17), he distinguishes between care and spiritual and religious needs (2.1), identifying a “general watch over their care” as his personal, professional responsibility. Iain, too, observes that, “I am here for the establishment, not just Anglicans. So it is natural to want to help facilitate others.” Like Tom, Iain perceives a responsibility which, while it arises from his job specification, is strikingly like the brokerage identified by Beckford (1999, 318).

For Tom the similarity with parish ministry lies in the somewhat detached nature of the parish priest’s situation:

Most Anglican churches don't encourage everybody to go to them but they are there and being part of a community and being a resource when people need it. You know like burying granny, baptising your niece or nephew or when you are getting married in a pretty church, that is when the Anglican church touches people. And those times of need that you might want to go and light a candle in a church or spend some time away.

Tom's picture of parish ministry is of one available to all at need or upon request, characterised by performing the occasional offices and rites of passage. His comment also suggests that the chaplain, like a vicar, is the custodian of spaces where significant life events can be marked:

A serious house on serious earth it is,  
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,  
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.  
.....  
Since someone will forever be surprising  
A hunger in himself to be more serious, (Larkin 1998, 98)

### **8.3 "A serious house on serious earth"**

Tom and other chaplains comment on providing space for prisoners to satisfy "the hunger..... to be more serious" so that the prison chapel is seen as a public space comparable with the parish church. The point is made in an official (though unpublished) paper:

For prisoners and staff there has to be a place in the community where, amidst all the pressures, distractions and deprivations of prison life, we can assert that each of us is a unique and irreplaceable person with a self which is ours and ours alone. The existence of designated places is an invitation to everybody living and working in prison to believe that their lives are important. (MOJ, 2007, 4)

The anonymous author writes later that "a chaplaincy seeking to serve prisoners, staff and faith communities is not just about a sectional interest in the community...." However, where there is only one full time chaplain, who is still most likely to be an Anglican priest, the chapel will probably be thought of as in some way equivalent to a parish church. The point was made in a focus group by the Salvation Army chaplain in HMP Norton where,

ironically, the chapel is also used by Muslims for Friday prayers and other activities:

A lot of the rhetoric isn't always translated into practicalities – the Anglo-Catholic tradition still rules, even in the geography of the chapel. ... there are still the altar, icons, stations of the cross. So there has been huge, huge, huge change but not to equality with everyone..... We still have to put up with all the trimmings and trappings of Anglo-Catholicism.

Esther, however, makes the point that prisoners will use the prison chapel to light a memorial candle although they might not think to use a church: "it's not as if they would go into a church necessarily to do it because they wouldn't necessarily go into a church in the first place." Her observation, like Cedric's in a different context, suggests limits to the plausibility and usefulness of making direct comparison between prison ministry and parish ministry. Like Tom, however, Esther's underlying model of chapel is as a local resource, available to all upon request but not as a result of pro-active seeking. She nevertheless perceives that, even with its Christian trappings, the prison chapel, as safe or sacred space, is effectively accessible to a wider range of the community at times of need than a parish church might be. Ironically, therefore, the imputation is that prisoners feel freer to engage with services and offices of the Church in the prison context than they would when they are at liberty in the outside world. More than that, Esther attributes a sense of ownership of the chapel to the women in her prison, as when a woman "who was down as a Satanist" vandalised and set fire to the chapel in Esther's absence, (4.1)

It is not clear from the account precisely what the women's motivation was; it seems that they wanted to protect Esther from the possible hurt of seeing the damaged area but Esther herself suggests that they have some sense of ownership which she encourages. It may be, therefore, that the women felt that a sacred (because safe and significant) place had been violated and recognised a spiritual bond between the space, the perceived guardian of that space and themselves.

#### 8.4 Prisoners as parishioners

Another way in which Anglican assumptions may be manifested lies in the fact that COE and CIW chaplains tend not to seek out or visit prisoners who register as Anglicans on a denominational basis, whereas chaplains of other faiths raise lists or are informed of any adherents currently in the prison.

Heather comments:

You belong to them in some slightly abstract sort of way; if they have a need they would know where to find you, erm but I think that the Anglican relationship to our prisoners, and I still in some ways see it as that just because they sign up for it, erm is, yes, massively different to any other faith category..... I have never systematically printed off a list of Anglicans and gone round and visited them to go and see whether or not they wanted to come or why they are not coming any more.

Heather's statement seems to reflect a view of COE as a default religious registration. Alexandra, who has been chaplain in three prisons, remarked:

I think that there is a tension if you are Anglican because you are not trained to be part of a team of people just looking after your own people. I have never ever gone around and looked after the Church of England; I probably should have done but I just can't do it.

She sees Anglican ministerial training as an important source of the attitude that everyone in a community is a parishioner who will come to the church if they perceive a need and hence do not require visiting or proselytizing. The COE registration as default is implied by Claudia; talking about variations in service attendance figures she says:

They go up and down like most jails. And Sasha and I are saying, "Is this because we are not being effective as Anglican chaplains?" And I know that is a bit weird because a lot of the people who have come in would be very surprised to receive a monthly visit from the Anglican chaplain because they had registered as Church of England.

She suggests that cultural and social *mores* on the outside explain the response of her colleague and herself in not following up registered Anglicans and even hints at a degree of embarrassment ("a bit weird....very surprised"). Claudia, however, is the co-ordinating chaplain as well as having regional responsibility so that she is prevented by socio-cultural and

bureaucratic factors from having time to visit registered Anglicans on a systematic basis.

There may very well be a role in doing a lot more work in following up people who have dipped a toe into the water. And I am talking now about those who may or may not come on Sunday depending on whether they have got up or not, I am talking about the people who dip into the Bible study, dip into the Holy Communion service ... I don't think we do enough follow up in terms of the pastoral work that we might do if we took our role as Anglican chaplains more seriously.

Claudia recognises what Heather called an abstract model of Anglican ministry and perceives it to be an inadequate means of encouraging faith development and practice though it is not clear whether she means "pastoral work" or more specifically faith based engagement. Her idea of follow-up seems to be more generically Christian than specifically Anglican, a perspective also outlined by Daniel and Gough. Heather, in fact, is more critical and self-critical than Claudia ("if we took....more seriously"):

I feel we give them a lousy service..... the most disadvantaged group of prisoners is Church of England without a shadow of a doubt because there isn't any possibility of us spending the amount of time to go and investigate, 'Where did it all go wrong for you with the Church of England?' or 'Do you want to have a relationship again?' sort of bringing people back into the fold.

Heather, the co-ordinating chaplain of a large, reputedly "difficult" prison, makes a point about the extent to which the bureaucratic demands of being the co-ordinating chaplain limit the scope and extent of specific faith ministry. Not one of my respondents, however, regularly prints a list of "their" prisoners to be visited systematically, unlike chaplains of other traditions. This implies that an inherited or ingrained Anglican model of parish ministry is at least equally responsible for Anglican registered prisoners not receiving the same proactive attention as other religious groups. It is not clear, though, what the rationale of visiting would be apart from the fact that other groups do it. Pattison, indeed, questions the plausibility of visiting. (2000, 74)

## 8.5 “A bit different to parish life”

One or two respondents seemed indifferent and, in one case, even hostile to the idea of being involved in parish ministry. Esther had felt underused as a NSM in a parish and had informed the bishop that she was going to help out in the chaplaincy of her local prison on a voluntary basis before applying to become a full time chaplain. Barbara, however, had serious reservations about more than one aspect of the COE:

I had great difficulty with the hierarchy of the Anglican church and I didn't really want to ally myself with it ..... I found myself training and I thought, "Well I don't know why because I know that I don't want to be an Anglican priest in a parish." I went into Wetherfield prison .....knowing nothing, nothing about prisons at all, total, total blank sheet and the doors clanked behind me and it felt like an aeroplane landing – wow, I really feel at home.

The two repetitions, the aircraft image and the exclamation give little impression of the force of Barbara's delivery on audio, culminating in "at home". It is possible that her antipathy towards parish ministry is connected with her upbringing in a former colony and the social cachet attached to the Anglican church in that country:

My problem with parishes and I think that this is probably due to my background as well is that they are..... the places that I have worked in and lived in have been monocultural, monofaith, WASP places if you like, with no sense of actually having to do anything that was outside the comfort zone.

Her words echo Ben's about "the terminally bored" (9.9), and indicate a need for a ministry centred around more immediate and palpable need than parishes in their experience had provided.

Gervase had originally combined part time ministry in a women's prison with parish ministry and was able to compare the experiences on a daily basis:

I found that I was working in the prison during the day and dealing with women prisoners' very complex needs, quite kind of heavy duty pastoral work, and then I was going back to the parish at night sometimes for meetings and things and people would be kind of arguing about things I'd regard as fairly trivial really. I thought, "I'm living in a parallel universe here."

His perception of parish ministry as relatively trivial and routine is crystallized in his balancing of “women prisoners’ very complex needs” with “meetings and things”, suggesting a clear contrast between ministering into direct urgent need and implicitly wasting time and energy over matters which seemed to him unimportant. In this he echoes Ben’s scepticism about parish ministry:

I often say to parish clergy, yes, we’ve the same kind of pastoral problems, but of course there’s the intensity here that you don’t get in a parish. I find myself as co-ordinating chaplain here now and there’s the admin and the running of the department that needs to be done, but I’ve still got that very intensive pastoral work that motivates me and you just don’t get that in a parish really.

Like Cedric, Gervase seems able to cope with the administrative demands of the post when they are combined with this specialised ministry.

Ronald had also felt himself to be emerging from under Anglican convention and routine when, as chaplain to a women’s prison, he encountered women lovers sharing beds: “It certainly challenged my theological view of things because having come from a parish where, certainly the parish I worked in, I didn’t get that sort of thing at all, not up front anyway.” (7.4)

Ronald seems to confirm the impression given by Ben, Barbara, Gervase about the intensity of challenge and need in prisons, even if something of his original shock remains in “I didn’t get that sort of thing at all”. Since he subsequently moved to another, larger prison it can be inferred that the adjustments, however unanticipated, in moving from parish to prison acted more as encouragement than deterrent.

One respondent, Freddie, manifests weariness with parish ministry not dissimilar to Ben’s but, unlike him, seems almost to suggest that prison ministry was less demanding and had been an opportunity for recuperation from the rigours of parish life: “We had been flogging in rural parishes for thirteen years and both my wife and I were very tired.....yes parish life is certainly quite dangerous; it is dangerous for the health.”

The most forceful comments upon parish and prison ministry, which are in sharp contrast to Freddie's, come from Roger, a chaplain with over twenty years' experience of ministry in prisons following military chaplaincy. Whereas Becky reflected that she had "gone native" after ministry in a busy metropolitan parish (9.9), Roger uses the same image to assert that he has not "gone native", maintaining a clerical presence in the parish where he lives alongside full time ministry in a prison. He rejects the comparison between parish and prison: "the whole prison system is so different and we keep on comparing it to outside church and parishes. It's quite a unique community, it's not a hospital, it's not a college, it's a prison. There's nothing else like it." One of the differences which Roger identifies concerns congregational gender:

Dealing with men is a bit different to a parish life where the majority of people in the parish are female and you have a different relationship and do things in a different way and you get a different response, and again you respect sort of manly things.

Although other gender issues arose with other respondents, nobody else mentioned this factor. While Roger does not expand upon what he means by "manly things", whether personal or social qualities, he nevertheless says enough to suggest that there is a style of chaplaincy which can reflect the hegemonic masculinity of some male prisons. Roger also speaks of the expectation that all prison staff will challenge offending behaviour, not a feature of parish ministry in the later modern or post-modern periods. He characterizes prison ministry in a way similar to Ben and Barbara, although his perspective on parish ministry is wholly opposite to theirs:

It is a ministry that is hard and tough; I have got to work for every inch that I get in this parish unlike in the parish outside where they are all very nice to me and when I preach a sermon they will tell me, "Wonderful sermon vicar," and in this congregation they will tell me it was rubbish, you know; it probably was and someone will tell me.

Roger is the only respondent who appears to hold parish and prison ministries in a creative tension. His appreciation of his roots in the parish system appears to be balanced by an appreciation of the directness of his exchanges with prisoners.

It is certainly possible to effect comparisons between ministries in parish and in prison, based on the interview data, even allowing for the variety of practice in both areas. Cedric and Ben, for example, speak of prison ministry partly as a lack of what they found to be the more irksome inevitabilities of parish ministry. Alexandra speaks of contrasting styles of involvement in ministry teams and Esther hints at chaplaincy, both as physical and spiritual place, as being differently configured in prison from incumbency in a parish. Becky, though, saw similarities in the broader involvement of clergy in both contexts while Roger rejects the very idea of comparability.

When prison chaplains talk about “parish” it is not clear what inherited or constructed model they are drawing upon. With two exceptions, Barbara and Iain, all speak of a vicarious and ubiquitous ministry underpinned by the principles of establishment and availability rather than pro-active mission. None of them interrogated the “parish ministry” concept in depth but accepted it as a given.

I have suggested that direct comparison between ministry in prisons and parishes is of limited use. Whilst Ben, George, Iain and Barbara might acknowledge each other’s assumptions about parish, their own referential models are clearly at odds with each other. What seems to be needed is a hold-all metaphor for ministry in both locations, providing a vocabulary for discussion and examination of “prison ministry” but without a comparative element. George’s reference to a “pastoral imperative” supplies the need.

## **8.6 “A resource when people need it.”**

Since the Anglican provinces in England and Wales are founded at least upon a geographical concept of parish as part of a diocese, it is not inappropriate to think of a prison as being comparably situated and bounded, although the intensity of that boundedness is variable. Cedric and Esther in their contrasting environments both imply this sense of place and its determining influence upon the practice of its inhabitants; Becky, too, uses the parish as a metaphor to refer to the nature of her total activity and, possibly, to justify it. More pervasive than these, though, is the image of the chaplain as enabler,

fixer or comforter in times of need; Ben adapts the language of one situation to the language of another by his telling use of the “essential oil...eau de cologne” image. Tom references his own ministry to the local church “being a resource when people need it”, especially for the performance of the occasional offices, and seems to be speaking metaphorically about his own ministry also. Tom’s implied model of parish ministry is echoed by Heather’s assertion that, “if they have a need they would know where to find you.”

Underlying these comments seems to be an untested assumption that the Anglican priest is the one who responds to needs and emergencies, is, indeed, the only one equipped to do so and will be the first point of call or reference. Whilst Anglican chaplains collectively have different perspectives on themselves and on their ministry, nearly all presuppose a centrality and universality in both parish and prison which is expressed in the pastoral imperative.

The praxis and perspectives of the Anglican chaplains are recognizable in a number of analytical comments upon the COE; Melinsky (1992) offers a view which is consonant with what many of my respondents told me: “the Church of England is not a sect or a denomination; least of all is it a religious club. A vicar or rector is instituted to the cure (or care) of souls in his parish, be they Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Hindu or atheist ones.” (1992, 267)

Melinsky’s distinction between communal and associational “concepts” of church barely applies to my own research since I found only one prison where the Anglican appeared to run an associational model: there appeared to be an inner group of adherents at HMP Norborough based upon attendance at a Thursday morning gathering rather than the more general, statutory Sunday morning service. Melinsky’s characterization of the communal model, on the other hand, reflects many of the views expressed to me:

[It] takes seriously the complex interaction between the church and the community within which it is set. It is glad to welcome all comers who seek, in however muddled a way, some sort of consecration of the great moments of life at birth and marriage and death. (1992, 208)

Esther, in speaking about those prisoners who arrive in the chapel to mark “the great moments of life”, implicitly locates the chapel as occupying a place near the centre of the social life of the prison and of its spiritual life also, however various or amorphous that might be. She hints too at the complex web of connections between the chapel, the chaplain and the community. This feature of being embedded is commented upon by Melinsky:

Every minister belongs to a community; it may be a local parish; for a prison chaplain it will be a prison.....he is at home there, because he knows his way around, he can demonstrate the church to be the family of God in that place; not a religious club for the like-minded, but a foretaste of the world redeemed. (1992,170)

Roger was insistent that parish ministry and prison ministry should not be compared, yet we begin to see that there are underlying similarities, that some of the same assumptions about availability and universal ministry underpin both ministries. The point is made by Avis as well as Melinsky: “The status of the Church of England as a national church, by law established, on which all citizens have a claim and which is deeply implicated in the life of the English people, is still controversial.” (Avis 2000, 12) Especially pertinent to the ministry of prison chaplains is Avis’s observation that “Anglican worship arises from a heartfelt sense of human need” (2000,9)

I suggest that Anglican prison chaplaincy can be thought to preserve a relatively antiquated form of ministry, that it is predominantly clerical and that it serves communities segregated not only by walls but by gender. These factors throw into question chaplains’ likening of their ministry to parish practice.

Perhaps, then, Roger is right and comparisons between the two ministerial contexts are not sustainable and the parallels between the two are based upon invalid assumptions. If so, what is distinctive about Anglican ministry in prisons? Chaplains take very seriously their responsibilities to what Melinsky termed the communal model of ministry, being available to all who request their ministry without pro-actively seeking out opportunities for it:

The term “folk religion” is much used, often disparagingly..... but this is the boundary on which the church stands and where the minister

must operate.... The communal model is truer to the gospel than the associative. (Melinsky 1992, 209)

Avis seems to speak for Anglican prison chaplains when he observes that, "Common religion – the inchoate religious beliefs and values of the unchurched – provides clergy with many opportunities of pastoral ministry." (2000,19) Both these comments are made in relation to mainstream ministry so we are pulled back to implied comparison and the ways in which respondents characterize their community in terms of need and their ministry in terms of accessibility.

It can be deduced from the data (for example Alexandra, George, Dennis, Becky, Esther and Roger) that there is an expectation of pastoral care on demand but that there is a limit to how far such expectations can be fulfilled.

Pauline observes that:

Every day we get phone calls from the wings saying, "Can we talk to the chaplain about," whatever... obviously there's bereavement, it happens all the time. I also get regular requests for counselling from people who are nothing to do with the chapel which I'm sorry to say I absolutely cannot meet and I will tell them that.

Pauline speaks as the only full time chaplain in a category C prison with some 600 prisoners. Similarly, though, Gervase, who is the newly-appointed co-ordinating chaplain of a 1000+ local prison and not the only full time team member, remarks:

It's taken me a long time to learn that it's not possible to make somebody feel entirely whole, entirely better with just one or two encounters. Very often it's a longer term engagement and there are some people, some situations one can never completely heal or resolve and for me that's been a learning curve really. You can't always walk away from them and leave them feeling better, leave them feeling OK. Hopefully you've made a difference, but particularly when you first get to know somebody you can't resolve things overnight.

Gervase speaks elsewhere in the interview of the time taken by administration and by settling into a new post but here he seems to be speaking of the practicalities of pastoral ministry in a busy, relatively short stay prison. He implies a distinction between a long term ministry of

restoration and a shorter ministry for which, like Roger, he coins a medical image: “Some people call it ambulance work, patching people up who are in trouble, sort of crisis, and that’s what does it for me really.” Gervase suggests that, whilst his ministry may be available to all, there are limits to the extent and efficacy of his involvement; nevertheless, he claims to thrive in this environment which he perceives to be so different from how he perceives parish ministry.

The data suggest, then, that there are high expectations of chaplains’ availability and ministerial efficacy, factors which appear to accord with three of the four criteria set out by Croft in his Pastoral Church model (1999, 195). Croft’s own comments seem to reinforce the plausibility of a limited application of this model to prison chaplaincy: “In the pastoral church, the key relationship is between each member of the congregation and the ordained minister. There is a high expectation on the minister of personal attention and care, particularly during times of crisis.” (1999, 195) A similar point is made and developed by Avis:

A parish priest relates primarily to families of one sort or another (not necessarily the conventional middle-class nuclear family.) A sector minister, on the other hand, relates much more to individuals, largely removed from the context and background provided by the family and community. (Legood 1999,3)

The data, then, suggest a drift towards an inclusive pastoral ministry, a move noted by Gilliat-Ray (Legood 1999, 31) but it is important to remember that these data are gleaned from chaplains themselves, whose perceptions may be nuanced differently from those of the people to whom they minister. Gervase speaks of trying to resist the role of “social worker with a collar” yet Todd and Tipton (2011, 22) comment on the difference between the perspectives of prisoners and chaplains:

Chaplains’ perceptions of their role can often differ noticeably from that of many prisoners who are less sensitized to the chaplain’s religious sensibilities, considering the chaplaincy and the support it gives as a humanitarian, rather than a spiritual or religious endeavour.

This comment serves as a limitation not only upon too close an identification with Croft’s pastoral church model but also upon the attempt to align the

prison chapel with the parish church. Dulles, writing out of the RC tradition, perceives a potential hiatus of identity for churches which he terms servant Church:

As the institutional model of church recedes from its primacy, there is a shift from the categories of power to the categories of love and service. We may welcome the current stress on the servant church as a sign of spiritual progress. But the concept of service must be carefully nuanced so as to keep alive the distinctive mission and identity of the Church. (Dulles 2002, 93-94)

Dulles's observation is important because it is consonant with Todd and Tipton's indication of divergent concepts of chaplaincy. Both they and Dulles avoid a binary view of church and not-church but each suggests that there is a movement away from a doctrinally led church to a church led by the pastoral imperative. My own data suggest that Anglican chaplains are aware of this and value a perceived need for a religiously grounded pastoral ministry which may be viewed by inmates – and possibly by other prison staff – as a more secular welfare activity.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **ANGLICAN CHAPLAINS' IDENTITY: "NOT A NORMAL WAY TO GO".**

9.1	Chaplains and change	207
9.2	The priesting of women	207
9.3	The Anglican chaplain under pressure in a plural society	209
9.4	Pressure from academic sources	211
9.5	Responses to pressure: the PSC conference 1999	212
9.6	Responses to pressure: the "paradigm shift" of William Noblett	214
9.7	Respondents' perceptions of their Anglican identity	216
9.8	The established Church: affiliation and disaffiliation	216
9.9	The affiliated chaplains	218
9.10	The disaffiliated chaplains	227

#### **9.1 Chaplains and change**

This section is concerned with how chaplains articulate their role not only as chaplains but as Anglicans in the prison system, where institutional change at national and local level could have significantly reconfigured their role both in the long span since the office became statutory and in the shorter span of twenty years or so. I shall outline the shorter term developments originating within the Prison Service and changes within the Anglican churches as they impinge upon ministry in prisons. This section, then, explores how and how far the Anglican affiliation influences chaplains in their negotiation and definition of their presence and practical function within the physical and demographic boundaries of an enclosed institution. Data analysis shows, however, not so much an opposition between ontology and function, as a

blend of the two since chaplains tend to talk about what they do rather than what they think their presence represents.

Chaplaincy conference programmes indicate that the role of the chaplain was being questioned by chaplains themselves in the 1960s as the presence in prisons of professional specialists such as psychologists and teachers spread. At that time “chaplain” was almost synonymous with Anglican so that the label “Anglican chaplain” might have been thought tautologous

A number of factors, both in the Prison Service, the English and Welsh churches and other faith communities combine to problematize the identity of the Anglican prison chaplains both as they are perceived by others and as they perceive themselves; the latter is my principal concern. The significant factors are:

- The priesting of women
- Pressures in a plural society
- Pressure from academic analysis
- HMPS Chaplaincy national conference, Liverpool 1999
- The paradigm shift

## **9.2 The priesting of women**

The first women were ordained into the priesthood of the COE in 1994 and of the CIW in 1997 and were being appointed as chaplains within a year of the first ordinations. I have not set out to ascertain how far, if at all, these women could be thought of as refugees (Hancocks, Sherbourne & Swift 2008, 163) from hostile churches and dioceses but my data indicate that gender issues in the Church can spill over into prisons and that women chaplains bring with them an awareness of these issues (7.3) so that they are able to compare the continuing, institutionalized sexism of the Church with the generalized sexism of the prison. The problem was not, though, confined to women; male clergy who opposed the priesting of women either on the basis

of ecclesial tradition or on scriptural issues of headship found that they might have to work with ordained female colleagues since the Prison Service's equal opportunities policy prohibits gender discrimination. Hence the identity of the Anglican chaplain had to be revised in the minds both of men and women. One chaplain in particular, Daniel, a conservative evangelical, found it necessary to define his own identity more closely in order to accommodate an ordained female colleague:

The conservative evangelical view is one of headship and within the context of the prison, to put it in sort of church terms, I am the bishop and she would be my priest. So that the headship principle is still established..... obviously I am not the Bishop but in that I would be her boss.

Daniel has to refer to a doctrinal tenet to align the woman's ecclesial status with her secular appointment. The problem was not mentioned by other respondents, most of whom identified themselves as liberal Catholics.

### **9.3 The Anglican chaplain under pressure in a plural society**

The issues here are about faith in a plural society rather than the more specific issues of ethnicity and faith, which the Prison Service has tended to conflate. During the 1990s pressure grew from other world faith representatives for the Church of England to relinquish its preeminent position in prison chaplaincy both at local and national level. A discussion paper ([www.penlex.org.uk](http://www.penlex.org.uk) 1996, 2) presented by Buddhist, Sikh and Muslim leaders to the then Home Secretary and Prisons Minister in March 1996, basing its case on apparently declining numbers of Christian prisoners over against an increase of non-Christians, commented:

It has become increasingly anomalous to have an entirely Christian chaplaincy, and whatever administrative changes may be made to cover the needs of the non-Christians, they would be no substitute for a voice at the centre.

This brief but wide ranging document goes on to focus more closely on the role of the COE locally ("there is plenty of anecdotal evidence of thin attendance at COE services, compared with full attendance at the meetings of

non-Christian religions.”) and moves back to a more global observation about the COE:

In our submission, the central role of one particular religious denomination in the prison system is unacceptable in a multi-faith society, and we propose that in the future when legislation is brought forward, it must ensure that all religions are treated equally.

A Home Office minister (quoted in the paper) had observed in the House of Lords that,

Within the prison the chaplain is concerned with the social values of justice and peace, of fairness and equitable dealing, and of growth and opportunity. He (*sic*) also plays a particularly important role in relation to the prison staff. A chaplain will thus find himself involved in many areas of staff anxiety.

The faith leaders accepted the role of the chaplain outlined in the speech but rejected the implication that only a minister of the COE could uphold these values, “which are common to all religions, or that only a COE minister could deal adequately with the spiritual and welfare needs of staff.” It acknowledges good working relationships between the COE chaplain and other faiths in some prisons but “this does not alter the fact that the present arrangements are objectionable in principle.” A document entitled *Notes for the Guidance of Chaplains appointed under the Prison Act 1952*, issued to new entrants at the time this writer joined the Prison Service as a chaplain, quotes “a letter to all chaplains, 4 July 1983” as saying that all chaplains,

are colleagues with no relation of superiority or inferiority..... Though there is no leadership role as such of the chaplaincy team, the Church of England shall, after appropriate consultation, act as representative spokesperson of the team to local management.

This would seem to try the integrity of Anglican chaplains faced with unpalatable views in their dealings with managers so that what had been intended as a collegial situation could and sometimes did become more authoritarian: “There have been instances where the governor has sought to make an appointment on the advice of the chaplain, against the recommendation of the authorities of the faith in question.” A Buddhist visiting minister (as non-Christian chaplains were then called) said,

I am always aware that the way I am treated varies from chaplain (Anglican) to chaplain and that on the two occasions where I have strongly disagreed they have used the power their position gives them to enforce their point of view. (Beckford 1999 ii, 320)

His words and those of the discussion paper make it clear that Anglican chaplains could and sometimes did use their position within the establishment to block unwanted developments or to ensure that there was a consistency of development – not necessarily innovation - which accorded with the Anglican view.

This situation pertained until the beginning of the 21st century and was still a constituent part of how some Anglican chaplains saw themselves and their role during the fieldwork period. As well as pressure brought to bear upon the legislature by leaders of other world faiths, there was pressure from other directions.

#### **9.4 Pressure from academic sources**

Beckford and Gilliat (1998) (2.1) remains the major survey of Anglican prison chaplaincy and has been followed by a number of papers from both authors separately. It is not possible to assess their influence on developments within the Prison Service but their work is important because it researches and references the points made in the previous section. Beckford summarises Visiting Ministers' objections under three main headings, information, facilities and inclusiveness (Beckford 1999(ii), 319). This implies a power vested in the Anglican chaplain to shape or control the level and quality of religious ministry in his prison in association with prison managers. Indeed, Beckford cites prison chaplaincy as "a site on which the state is able to exercise quasi-control over the public practice of religion," (1999(ii),316). Beckford does not mean that this is the only site where such control is exercised or that England and Wales are the only countries where it occurs, citing the US Federal Bureau of Prisons as another example. But the control, implicit or realised, of the chaplain at the microcosmic level is a reflection of a macrocosm in which an Archbishop of Canterbury claimed to be "chaplain to the nation" and where "the Church of England is the most representative

organisation in England and Wales and is widely considered to be a major symbol of national identity,” (1999(ii), 317). Beckford then shows how chaplains are simultaneously Anglican clerics and civil servants and how this can operate to inhibit freedom of religious practice: “They are agents of the British state’s policy for managing religious diversity.” (Beckford 1999 (i), 56) Beckford clarifies the significance of this in another paper from 1999:

Most significantly from my point of view, Christian chaplains and prison administrators have the discretion to decide whether visiting ministers are appointed to supply religious and pastoral care to non-Christian prisoners. (Beckford 1999 (iii), 674)

He acknowledges that there are instances of harmonious working acknowledged by non-Christian ministers and that the status quo is not ineffective. The obligation upon chaplains to provide for the religious needs of all and the fact that they are generally highly regarded by prison staff mean that they are well placed to be effective. (Beckford 1999(i),674). Despite this corrective, Beckford records that 87% of the Anglican chaplains in his sample had refused to share responsibility for chaplaincy with a committee representing the main faiths in their prisons (Beckford 1999(ii), 320). It would have been interesting to seek other perspectives, especially those of establishment managers; the constraints of budgets and core day timings are inescapable parameters within which managers have to work and have been apt to affect all faiths and denominations. However, the main import of Beckford’s papers is that part of the Anglican chaplains’ sense of who and what they were would derive from the centrality of their role in determining religious provision, based upon their status as ordained priests of the established church (though not formally in Wales) and their position in the hierarchy of the prison management structure.

## **9.5 Responses to pressure: the PSC Conference 1999**

In September 1999, the year that Beckford’s three papers were published, a PSC conference was held at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. Two of the speakers were the Chaplain General (CG), David Fleming, and the Director General of the Prison Service (DG), Martin Nary. The CG referred to the

appointment of a full time Muslim advisor and the setting up of a religious advisory committee, but he was clear, as was the DG, that the groundwork had been laid by Anglican chaplains, especially in the production of the *Guide to Religious Practices*. Nevertheless, a close analysis of their words reveals differences of emphasis between the two and a potential for schism. Fleming was concerned about institutional racism in the days after the Macpherson enquiry and responded with both anger and sadness to the accusations of illegality and exclusivism being made against PSC in the face of what he saw as the practical progress which had been made by senior Anglican chaplains. Significantly his speech is shot through with references to ecumenism and “Other Faiths” and is based on an implied assumption that the status of the COE will be maintained.

The position of the Prison Service Chaplaincy and the Church of England within it has been described by our critics as a position of power. I see it and have always seen it as an opportunity for service...If we remain determined and united in our endeavour to serve God by serving prisoners and staff, I have no doubt all will be well. (1999 Conference transcripts)

These brave and hopeful words attempt to reaffirm the central position of the COE as honest broker between faith groups and managers and as supporter of other faith advisers (“the new full time Muslim adviser. I have been fully involved and supportive of his appointment.” Indeed, Fleming had suggested the appointment, according to the DG.)

The point which should emerge from this is not that Fleming was seeking to do or be anything other than honourable and helpful. Nor is he unrealistic when he speaks elsewhere in the address of the economics of providing full time chaplains for small numbers of adherents. It is simply that he was not able to see or to articulate the provision of a more diverse and observably equitable religious ministry across prisons at a time when others were beginning to see how it might or ought to be. He emphasised a need for unity and consistency in the PSC as:

a national service....at a time when the Service is moving towards recognised national standards. We certainly want examples of good practice, but not practice produced unilaterally and proclaimed

nationally as if it was the be all and end all of everything. (1999 Conference transcripts)

It may be that Fleming was responding to an article which had appeared that month in *Crucible* (1999 & 2000), in which William Noblett, Anglican chaplain at HMP Full Sutton, outlined a radical reordering of the chaplaincy in his establishment. I discuss this paper in the next section.

The DG, in his address, repeatedly pays tribute to Fleming and to the PSC as, indeed, does Muhammad Abdul Yamani in his preface to a handbook for imams ministering in prisons. (Wilson & Sharp 1998, 3) The DG's speech, however, is flecked with references to the need for change rather than development of the status quo:

I know that chaplains take an inclusive view of their pastoral responsibilities, but of course they cannot cater for the purely religious needs of other faiths...I hope that the Advisory Group will provide a means by which we can obtain authoritative advice on other faith matters and agree practical issues such as appointments, remuneration and terms and conditions. (1999 Conference papers)

It recognises issues raised in the discussion paper presented to the Home Secretary ("of course they cannot cater", "authoritative advice"). He is adamant about the position of the new Muslim adviser: "I am confident that Maqsood's presence within the Chaplaincy...and when I say within the Chaplaincy I mean just that." (Emphasis in original transcript.) Whilst expressing gratitude to and support for Fleming, the DG makes it clear that there will be change and that failure to adapt to new situations and new European Human Rights legislation could even land HMPS in court. He signals the end of brokerage and intermediary activity and suggests a redrawing of the Anglican chaplains' role in line with the changing demography of the country and their identity within the prisons. My data show how far these changes have influenced chaplains' perceptions of what it means to be an Anglican prison chaplain in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **9.6 Responses to pressure, the 'paradigm shift' of William Noblett**

Noblett's first paper appeared in *Crucible* (1999), published by the COE Board of Social Responsibility; whilst this does not confer an imprimatur it

nevertheless suggests an openness of mind to reassessing the Anglican role in prison chaplaincy. Much the same comment can be made by its reprinting in *Prison Service Journal* (127, 4-8) the following year and a third appearance in *New Life* (2001, 36). The paper thus addressed three constituencies, the Church, the Prison Service and chaplains themselves. The extent to which the paper opposed Fleming's continuity model is clear from the outset:

In this personal reflection I suggest one way of helping promote the inclusiveness of which the Prime Minister spoke, and the professed aim of the Home Secretary. I advocate a move to a more inclusive, multi-faith prison chaplaincy. I suggest Church of England predominance in publicly funded chaplaincies belongs to the past; that chaplaincy needs to be inclusive, not exclusive; to be at the heart of collaboration; to nurture relationships, not just religions; to develop an ecumene of faiths, not simply Christian ecumenism; to acknowledge the equality of people created in the image of God. (Noblett 2000, 4)

Whilst this contains individual elements which are not incompatible with the traditional model of prison chaplaincy – Noblett speaks of “continuity *and* change” (my emphasis) in a paradigm shift - the whole agenda is coloured by the proposal that the era of Anglican predominance “belongs to the past” and is implicitly legitimated by the allusion to senior government ministers. Noblett further critiques the CG's approach in his own lexis when he speaks of “an ecumene of faiths, not simply Christian ecumenism.” The paper is described as a personal reflection but is, in fact, a closely and extensively detailed account of radical changes already implemented and planned at HMP Full Sutton, supported by theological reflection and academic reference. Noblett redefines the COE's role in confronting the problems of institutionalised racism and the contribution that PSC could make by example. It is tempting to stitch a consequential narrative based in causality out of these statements and events but that remains at the level of inference since the main players at the time prefer not to speak of it, with one exception who spoke informally and off-record. Otherwise my requests for interview were politely and regretfully declined. Nor is it possible to assess the relevance of Noblett's being an experienced prison chaplain over against

Fleming's background in rural ministry. William Noblett was appointed Chaplain General to Prisons in 2001, the first serving chaplain to be so.

Noblett's second paper was published after his appointment (Jones & Sedgwick 2002, 89-102) and, whilst making much the same points, has the character of a manifesto at least as much as a credo. What had been a situated opinion and proposal had become a statement of intent and strategy which became HMPS policy. Beckford has kindly allowed me to reinforce this observation by quoting from a letter to him from former DG, Phil Wheatley:

The Prison Service will continue to increase the provision of imams and to improve access to Fridays (*sic*) prayers for Muslim prisoners. William Noblett's multi-faith approach is one I strongly support with resources being shared between the different religions in a way which reflects the proportions of the prison population belonging to each faith. (Personal email 30/09/2013)

To summarize, an analysis of chaplains' own accounts of their identity has to be read against fundamental changes in the COE and the PSC, both in action and discourse, beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the new millennium during the writing of this thesis.

### **9.7 Respondents' perception of their Anglican identity**

Respondents defined their Anglican identity in various ways. The majority, though by no means all the data fell into the second level codings of:

- the legal, established status of the COE, (Chapter 2)
- relations with the institution and its hierarchy, (Chapter 5)
- pastoral practice based on a view of the prison as parish (Chapter 8)
- liturgy (Chapter 6)

I next consider how chaplains identify themselves as Anglican.

### **9.8 The COE as established church: affiliation and disaffiliation**

At one end of the spectrum of responses some respondents saw their status, and hence their identity in the prison, as deriving from their affiliation with

the COE and its status as the established church (4.6; 8.1). Whilst they were certainly aware of the changes in the PSC consequent upon Noblett's papers and claimed generally harmonious and effective working relationships with chaplains of other faiths, they nevertheless identified themselves in ways which Anglican chaplains might have done twenty years earlier, as parish priests in a national church. Some chaplains, especially those in one regional focus group, were aware that a conceptual model of parish ministry might be out of date: a chaplain with only three years parish experience observes of himself during a focus group, "I am stuck in the past and I am quite happy to admit that .....I am a cradle Anglican; it is all that I have ever known and when I read the *Church of England Newspaper* nowadays I can't comprehend what is going on out there."

In the same group, a chaplain who had, by contrast, served twenty five years in parishes and five in prisons thinks that "It is a bit like being a parish priest used to be in that you just be, you are, and for me it is an enormous privilege." He goes on to articulate his discomfort,

I am not at all mission orientated, I never have been, and one of the things that I find hugely uncomfortable in contemporary parish life is that it has all got to be about evangelism and mission and growth, probably to pay the bills more than anything else.

It appears from this and from other data that the ontological, vicarious nature of an earlier model of Anglican priesthood is valued by chaplains across a broad range and is reckoned to be still practicable in prison ministry. Very few respondents declare an overtly evangelical or missiological purpose; this does not seem to relate to feelings of affiliation or disaffiliation. The respondent's words above are important, though, because they seem to reflect the stance of a majority of Anglican chaplains. For some of them an apparently old-fashioned model of ministry is a positive attraction, as some of them also see it to be for other prison staff.

I now go on to distinguish below between those who consider themselves to be actively and ideologically affiliated to the COE and the disaffiliated, those who see themselves as being apart from it.

## 9.9 The affiliated chaplains

The most extreme expression of this perspective was uttered by Penny: “You are the bishop’s representative, you are the Queen; you do swear those oaths.” This puts her ministry in the constitutional context of a state rather than national church, which no other respondent identified in such a traditional form. Tom referred to the legal framework as historical precedent for current practice:

I think that the nature of Anglican priesthood has always been, “We are there for everybody.” We can’t just say, “We’re the established church.” We are there in every community with a parish system. And there has always been that duty I suppose that we have to be responding to everybody who comes to the door. Whereas other faiths, other denominations .... are more exclusive.

Tom makes an association between legal necessity in prison terms, Anglican identity and the vicarious application of that identity in society; although he perceives the assertion of affiliation to the established church to be an insufficient basis for presence in a publicly funded institution, he nevertheless accepts its pastoral implication “responding to everybody”, comparing it with what he perceives to be the more circumscribed ministry of other faiths.

Consciousness of Anglican identity led other chaplains to contrast themselves with the chaplains of other faiths. Claudia, who likened her ministry to that of a rural vicar in earlier centuries, said:

The co-ordinating role and the Anglican role is so complicated because you don’t have to be Anglican to do it; we all know that now, we just do. But you do have to have that Anglican attitude that the job is such a wide inclusive job and I will embrace all of that and I don’t see..... necessarily some of our brothers and sisters having that sort of all-embracing attitude.

Despite her collaboration with and affection for her colleagues of other faiths and denominations, Claudia perceives an Anglican awareness of inclusion to be a pre-requisite for performing the functional role of co-ordinating chaplain. George acknowledges this view but also predicts its end whilst

demonstrating how an awareness of Anglican affiliation can predetermine assumptions about function and status:

Anglican clergy will assume that if you are the Anglican chaplain you must be the head of chaplaincy or you must be the co-ordinating chaplain; it is difficult for them to conceive of the Anglican chaplain being simply the Anglican chaplain, nothing more and nothing less. So that is a hangover from the past that Anglicans will play the lead role and other people will be very welcome but they.... it will be a support role rather than a lead role.

George is speaking here about clergy in the mainstream church but he relates how attitudes in the established church can be conveyed into expectations about prison ministry:

Lots of people come into Prison Service chaplaincy from parishes where they have been either the team leader or a key player and, erm, now it may be a bit of a shock to find that they are simply a team member and that's partly driven by the unfolding multi faith chaplaincy and it is partly driven by different models of ministry that they come up against and are affected by within the Prison Service chaplaincy.

George echoes Claudia's observation about the attitudes of other chaplains although his comment has more to do with status than with function. He foresees an end even to the necessary presence of an Anglican chaplain:

**Do you think it would still be natural, is there something about the style or the assumptions or the status of the Anglican church which makes it still suitable?** No, I think that will become increasingly an anachronism; I think that it will all be driven by needs and resources if you could demonstrate that from your prisoner profile you have a need for full time, part time, Church of England chaplain or Church of Scotland chaplain or any other chaplain, that will determine employment; it won't be the fact that we have a state church and therefore "a clergyman of the Church of England" ought to be a chaplain or one of the chaplains in the prison.

Despite this, George had earlier told me how he had had to persuade his successor as co-ordinating chaplain (a Muslim) of the need to change his pastoral and management style although he did not identify this as a specifically or essentially Anglican style.

Alexandra, like George, is aware of Anglican attitudes which assume leadership and she is additionally aware of the tensions which can arise from this:

I had a very interesting set-to with somebody who is free church who was absolutely vitriolic to me because I was Anglican; it wasn't me, but because of the way the Anglicans had treated him. Because, you know, Anglicans just rule don't they, and actually that is awful but it is very difficult to get away from that when you are the established church of the country.

She locates precisely how attitudes born out of national status are inappropriate and can become irritants in local situations. She is aware of tensions between her ordained Anglican status and the context of ministry in a secular organisation but, more than that, she experiences a tension within herself:

I feel quite often that I am sort of split in two because by nature I am, I like being part of a multi faith team, I don't feel that I am any better or worse than my colleagues in either Christian or other faith. I think that we have all got something to offer and all faiths have got something to offer. I am very universalist about it but then actually the other part of me, that has to work within the diocese that has to be licensed by the Bishop..... how can you stop yourself thinking oh well this is the church of this land, because it is?

Alexandra suggests that Anglican awareness is nurtured both by training and by the significance which the Church visibly attaches to chaplaincy when it holds licensing services in the prison:

All these people from the cathedral came because they obviously wanted to support, you know, the prison. They have been great, the diocese has been really good and supportive. But of course the other members of the team, one in particular, was (*sic*) really put out because what did they get when they came? Nothing. Their sending churches didn't do anything and I came in as, not as the co-ordinating chaplain, as a member of the team, and I got this great big licensing and it really made me think that we haven't sorted the role of the Anglican chaplain.

“This great big licensing” is identical in format and symbolism to the licensing of parish clergy and includes, as Penny pointed out, the oath of allegiance and the oath of canonical obedience. The Anglican churches' formal recognition of chaplaincy appointment in liturgy and hierarchical presence is contrasted

with the more functional procedures of other groups and denominations (which Alexandra is inclined to refer to as a single entity, strengthening an impression of the Anglicans versus the rest.) Her perspective is important because it highlights the way in which the structures and procedures of the Anglican churches develop and reinforce assumptions of primacy which carry the potential for tension and discord:

As an Anglican chaplain you are in quite a difficult position because you are trying to lead two separate existences. One as an equal member of a multi faith team and one as somebody who, yes, has been trained in a church which is the established church of the country,

Alexandra and I had talked about these concerns earlier in the interview but she initiated a further discussion of them at what I had intended to be the end of the interview. As a relatively new chaplain she already had experience of two prisons though not as co-ordinating chaplain.

Alexandra's precise concerns are not shared by other chaplains, even those who recognise them. Some simply appear to take their Anglicanism as a given starting point; so Esther says: "being Anglican makes a difference because it's simply how I see what I do, it is the tradition that I have grown up in and it is not even something that I think of."

Likewise, Ben finds that his own and others' perception and acceptance of his Anglican affiliation is a platform from which to pursue his ministry: "it mirrors the demography probably of the local area so much, erm, you just crack on and everybody just accepts things." His "probably" seems to imply an almost casual assumption about faith patterns in the local area whereas his knowledge of it is detailed and current, given his previous ministry as an area dean in what is a remote rural area; the audio recording shows that greater emphasis is on "so much". The distinction is important because Ben claims that his status is legitimated and sustained by the position of the COE in the community outside the prison. His response to my question (about local circumstances) shows how his own and other peoples' perceptions allow him to minister in a particular way:

**How far, if at all, is there a perception of the Anglican as still “the” prison chaplain?** I think.... well because I am the only employed chaplain here, the rest are sessional, I think that probably still pertains here. And actually I don’t work to disabuse that because I can use that to be anywhere in this prison. So I can spend half an hour in the gate lodge sometimes where other people are not allowed to go, or the security office or you know in the.....segregation unit or wherever, because I am regarded as the chaplain and even sort of young staff coming in seem to pick up from older staff that somehow the chaplain is part of the fabric of the place and OK, there are other members of the chaplaincy team and they get very welcomed on the wings when they go down.

This is a complex response introducing elements which I had not mentioned. Ben observes that he is the only employed (and, as it happens, full time) chaplain with the clear inference that other staff will know him better than they know the other team members. He is able to penetrate all parts of the prison not only, perhaps not even, because he is Anglican but because he is the full time chaplain. The fact of his Anglicanism is still an operative factor, however, insofar that he has been in prison chaplaincy since the time when “co-ordinating chaplain” still tended to imply “Anglican chaplain”. He draws a telling distinction between other chaplains being welcomed “on the wings” and his own permission to enter where staff are not able to. It should be said that this does not denigrate the ministry of his colleagues; he prizes his theological dialogue and social relations with them. It might be argued that he starts from a privileged Anglican base at the expense of other faiths; the surrounding area, however, tends towards the monocultural and the sessional chaplains of other world faiths travel significant distances to reach the prison, in some cases over 100 miles. In this more detailed way Ben’s presence reflects the local demography and influences the style of his ministry as well as relationships within the team. These material circumstances serve to contextualise his comment that “I don’t work to disabuse that”. In addition, something of the community outside the walls, where prison staff live, sustains the concept of chaplain as meaning Anglican chaplain through the handing on of the notion to new staff.

An alternative reading of Ben’s data might show him preserving a privileged Anglican status, continuing from his earlier parish ministry. As I show below,

however, his relationship with the COE is more complex and is inimical to exclusive or “understood” arrangements.

Anglican affiliation amongst the respondents does not, however, depend only upon legal imperative or tradition. Charlie, a charismatic evangelical who identified himself as always having been “on the edge of the church”, identifies with what he sees as the social mission of the COE:

I’m very pro Church of England. I never expected to become a canon but I’m not one of those who slag off the Church of England because very often they’re the one church who are in there on the estates. Some of these very large churches are ministering to middle class people and students. That’s not what it’s about.

Charlie aligns his own ministry “on the edge” in a YOI with churches whom he sees as evangelising in adverse surroundings which, he implies, is – or should be – the central task of the COE. He suggests, despite his own status as a canon of the cathedral, that recognition in the COE does not go to those who are “on the edge”, but prizes the Church for its willingness to work at the margins. His statement of allegiance places both himself and prison ministry conceptually in a liminal situation. It also echoes a more jaundiced comment by Ben (8.5):

When people actually come up to see us, prisoners, they really do actually need something by and large, whereas I think that in my more cynical moments I would say that in parish ministry a lot of the time you are dealing with the terminally bored.

Both Charlie and Ben imply an immediacy and vitality in their ministry based on need and contrast it with examples of less demanding or stimulating ministry in parts of the mainstream Church. For both respondents, at least part of their Anglican identity is determined by being able to engage with the needs of the dispossessed.

A different kind of affiliation was expressed by Iain, whose background and earlier ministry was in another Anglican province; for him “Anglican” does not equate with “COE” or the quasi-established CIW. “I am not English, I have no background in the Church of England, so what I look for in my tradition might not be what Church of England colleagues will see.” Iain articulates a

broader sense of Anglicanism which is not rooted in constitutional status and which is disconnected from the English model of Anglicanism:

Part of me struggles slightly with the state church concept; to be honest, I am slightly uneasy with that, of being there for all and I know that is the way, that is the law, but ..... it is a strange concept for me.

Even so, Iain recognises a situated ministry to all in the prison context, arising from the 1952 Act, rather than the traditionally vicarious role of the COE in the church outside the prison. He does not regard himself as being in charge so much as serving and helping other colleagues, in contrast with Alexandra's perception of Anglican "rule": "I am here for the establishment, not just Anglicans. So it is natural to want to help facilitate others." Iain suggests that,

There is an Anglican identity that I feel I want to identify with, even in the Sunday congregation who are very formally joint Anglican/free church congregation but I see myself, probably increasingly, that I am here as an Anglican priest. I have certain obligations as an Anglican priest. My free church colleagues, we work together, we plan out what we do but if I am there at the altar I am there as an Anglican priest; I see other traditions have a clear identity amongst themselves but amongst Anglicans there is not.

It is not clear from this how Iain perceives Anglican identity; he seems to contradict himself by wanting "an Anglican identity" but being unable to see such a distinct identity. It is almost as if he defines it by the obligations placed upon him by the 1952 Act. A few moments later he suggests an additional criterion when talking about a band who had taken part in a Sunday morning service of Holy Communion;

It turned out they thought they were at a Roman Catholic service. Now to me it was fairly typical standard Anglican, normal, just vestments, candles, pretty simplified liturgy but, where they come from wasn't where I was coming from theologically, spiritually;

Iain's Anglican identity seems here to be defined by his difference from the visitors and by his liturgical practice (6.3), by functionality rather than ontology. There may be a disconnection between his sense of identity as an Anglican chaplain in legal terms and as a priest at the altar. The extract above raises, however, a further question about how far, if at all, Anglicans

have an identity which is distinct from other Christian denominations and does not in prison arise from legal prescription. Iain's search for an Anglican identity which he finds it difficult to define and his discomfort with the model of a national church indicates how far the legal requirement remains rooted in an English model of Anglicanism. I should add, however, that no such reservations were evident in the responses of CIW chaplains.

A different category of affiliate is the one who claims affiliation but relegates its significance in favour of the more broadly "Christian", a prisoner registration which is growing at the expense of denominational descriptors and conceals differences not only of theology but of the framing of the chaplain's role. The appointment of generic Christian chaplains was cited by the Principal Roman Catholic chaplain in HMPS as the reason for his resignation and the withdrawal of the Roman Catholic Church from membership of the Chaplaincy Advisory Council. (2.1; 4.5.4.i) Some respondents come close to identifying themselves as Christian in preference to Anglican. This half way point between affiliation and disaffiliation takes different forms. Gough told me:

I want to enable the people that are coming to pray, and if I'm doing that I've achieved and that's more important to me than whether it is actually Anglican liturgy, even though I stand by, for the most part, the doctrine of the Anglican liturgy.

Gough, who identified himself as a conservative evangelical, appears to value and encourage personal prayer over liturgical prayer though he is at pains to stress his adherence to the doctrine underpinning COE liturgy, even appearing to suggest that liturgy is itself doctrine. Off audio Gough referred to an interest in 17<sup>th</sup> century Anglican liturgy. His standpoint is that which used to be known as "low" church in that he balances personal relationship between the individual and God with a scripturally based liturgy. He is also one of the few respondents to speak of religious teaching or developing faith practices while others lament the lack of time or opportunity.

For Becky the affiliation was stretched almost to breaking point by the remark of a (very senior) diocesan bishop:

The connection with Anglicanism is very, very tenuous really and it has been all the way through, partly by choice. Like when I told the Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ that I was applying to go to (prison name) he said, "Are you going native?" and I think that I have, I think that I have. I didn't quite understand it but I do 11 years on, I quite understand it.

(See also 8.5) Elsewhere Becky, who moved to a prison in an isolated area from one in a large conurbation, describes her efforts to stay in touch with the COE but this comment is significant because, like Charlie, Becky perceives her brand of Anglicanism to be "on the edge"; the bishop's question hints that it is foreign and inferior (the colonial overtones of "going native"). Becky is not a disaffiliate but has been encouraged to think of herself as, perhaps, not being in full affiliation with the COE. A focus group member had experienced a comparable attitude at clergy selection board:

I felt that I had always had a call to prison ministry and not parish but on my ABBM, 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."

Even amongst affiliates, then, there is a stratum of chaplain consciousness which complements Anglican awareness and is a response to the attitudes implied by "going native" and "a proper job", which seem to devalue chaplaincy as ministry. This consciousness emerged clearly in the words of a woman priest in the same focus group:

I actually felt called into prison and had to go through the Anglican system which didn't quite cope with me to begin with because it is not a normal way to go. But it eventually understood my calling, that [it] wasn't first and foremost into parish ministry, it was into chaplaincy. And whilst I believe my calling was to be a priest I still believe that it was, at least at the moment, to be a chaplain priest rather than a parish priest.

She associates "didn't quite cope with me" with "not a normal way to go", and suggests a degree of persistence in pursuing her calling. In doing so she offers what could become an objective classification for the COE (and other churches) of chaplain priest and parish priest. (Saxbee 2009, 105-106)

## 9.10 The disaffiliated chaplains

One respondent who might be thought of as a disaffiliate is Robin, another evangelical priest:

I have never been strong on the Anglican bit and I am certainly not the sort of person who wants to reproduce the Eucharist from a parish Sunday morning in a prison; that has never been my sort of vision although I know there are chaplains who do that successfully because that is a fit for them.

Like Iain, Robin, seems to make an association between liturgy and Anglican identity, suggesting that a real Anglican would conduct a COE Eucharist service in the prison chapel every Sunday. His partial, almost casual, repudiation of “the Anglican bit” seems to cut him adrift from the chaplains for whom it is “a fit”. Robin projects a circumscribed view of what it is to be Anglican which reflects only one part of ecclesial practice but serves to define his own perception of himself, albeit in the most general terms, by defining what he is not.

I identify another group as disaffiliates, those for whom the Anglican label meant little and even aroused a measure of hostility; Ben remarked: “I think that my appreciation of the Church of England is somewhat tarnished at times.” Ben finds himself drawn to the RC Church’s theology: “If I went over to them it wouldn’t be on the women’s ordination issue, it would be much more on the understanding of what the church is and the community that’s involved in it,” but this does not wholly explain his disillusionment with the COE. I sensed a controlled resentment as he spoke of how the bishop and the archdeacon had failed to support him pastorally at a time of need:

When I was taken ill last year the Catholic Bishop phoned up to find out how I was and the Catholic church offered me all the support that I needed, sacramentally, spiritually. The Archdeacon was the first person from the Church of England who also knew that I was quite dangerously ill; he actually rang last month for the first time, to say he was too busy to come and see me because he has a lot of visitations coming on. Which actually colours one’s appreciation of where this is all going.

Underlying this is Ben's implicit perception that the Archdeacon has chosen to allot his time to the routines of parish ministry rather than the pastoral needs of a critically ill chaplain, also a holder of the bishop's licence. (10.2) He also seems to detect personal animosity arising from the conversion to Catholicism by a close member of his family: "the then Archdeacon used to ring me at least 4 times a week on Deanery business..... the phone went dead for 5, 6 months. The Bishop barely spoke and they thought that this was the ultimate act of betrayal."

Ben seems to be in the process of disaffiliating from the COE for complex reasons. He is drawn to the RC Church's sacramental theology but this attraction has been reinforced by the active concern of the RC bishop on the one hand and, on the other, the institutional priorities and apparent ostracism of the diocesan hierarchy. The significance of Ben's response and reasoning goes beyond personal resentment and hurt. It suggests that his move towards disaffiliation is reinforced by the local Anglican hierarchy's virtual severance of their pastoral and professional links with him which may, as he says, reflect a sense of betrayal but which may also relegate a chaplain, albeit one who is critically ill, to a status secondary to parish clergy and the routines of the diocese.

Ironically, however, Ben seems to live more easily with his identity as a chaplain in a separated context than he had as a parish priest:

When we moved to our present house, which is not a church house, which is our house, nobody commented on the furniture that was going in, nobody came round to sort of try and peer in first or be the first to meet the new rector and his family. We were just another couple moving into a road and that was so refreshing.

Ben's repetition of structure ("which is...") seems to emphasise a value in separateness from the Church and from the intrusive pressures of living and working, as if the identity of parish priest with its institutional and social implications had become irksome to him, whereas he is anxious to be visible and available in his prison setting and derives personal and professional fulfilment from it: "I once said to somebody that since I started I haven't had a

day where I haven't driven in excited about the day ahead and I think that I would still maintain that."

Ben's disenchantment with the COE is complex and seems likely to lead him into the RC Church, yet he retains a form of Anglican identity, one which is defined by his function and status as a representative of the established church within the boundaries of a total institution. He is not to be compared with the chaplain who told me off-audio that he had nothing to do with the COE outside prison, that he attended a Baptist church but found the civil service pay scale and holiday allowance to his liking. Ben, by contrast, seems to have had to re-make an Anglican identity in the wake of a deteriorating relationship with the hierarchy. This account is necessarily one-sided but it at least raises the question about what an Anglican identity might be based upon other than the formality of the bishop's licence. A more rigorously sceptical analysis of Ben's data would be needed if it were not that the tone and the attitudes resonate with other accounts from chaplains who are unknown to each other. Acknowledgement of an Anglican identity seems to rest, at least in part, on the enacted attitudes of senior Anglican clergy.

A comparable, though less obviously complex, example of active fracture was expressed by Colin (10.2). He had arranged a meeting with the diocesan bishop to discuss ways in which chaplains in singleton situations, not only in prisons, might meet and develop a network of mutual support:

We arranged a day; it must have been about a dozen of us, mental health and prison service chaplains went for tea at the bishop's. I can't quite recall the exact words that he used but he couldn't have made it plainer if he had tried to say, "My role as the bishop is to support the parish clergy. I regard you as getting your support from elsewhere." However he said it, it came over, not only to me but to a number of people, as much as to say, "Well, what was all that about? Either we get on and do something for ourselves, clearly the bishop's not saying I own you, I'm interested in you."

Detailed scrutiny of this statement belongs in an analysis of chaplains' relationships but also belongs here insofar that it reiterates a sense of distance between the chaplains and their own faith group which seemed to be crystallised in Colin's later wry comment: "Somewhere out there is the

Church of England; I don't know where it is but it comes in at Christmas.”

This bleak comment seems to suggest that Anglican affiliation is no more than a memory for Colin and that the disjunction is a product of Anglican hierarchical attitudes and priorities.(10.3)

Two respondents acknowledged their identity as Anglican but saw problems in that affiliation:

There is part of me that would quite like the church disestablished because then you are on the same footing, everybody is on the same footing but then there is part of me that says actually that would be so sad because we have woven into the fabric of our land something which is quite important.

Alexandra questions the national status of the COE but recognises that it has a strong historical and social profile; she also maintains her links with the diocese as a form of external support since she has little contact with chaplains in other prisons. She cannot, therefore, be categorised as a disaffiliate. Daniel appears to contrast with Gough in jettisoning the Anglican descriptor (6.4) while encouraging and developing faith practice:

**Does it matter that you are an Anglican?** It doesn't really and I think this through with the lads actually because some of them, you know, you get the ones who come in and find a faith and am I wanting to make them into Anglican Christians? I am not necessarily; I want them to find a church that will support them when they get out and will help them not to reoffend, but also spiritually will help them in their worship.

Daniel manifests here a concern not only with faith practice but with faith organisations as agents of rehabilitation and his comment needs to be read in the context of his work with STP in his YOI. It may, of course, be a function of my questioning that Gough did not mention these aspects but Daniel volunteers a strong association between faith practice and preventing reoffending. In this he echoes the belief of 19<sup>th</sup> century chaplains such as Russell, Field and Kingsmill in the power of scripture and prayer to reform lives away from criminality. Gough appears to recognise this as part of Anglican tradition and current practice. Although they outline their ministry styles in similar terms, Gough eventually roots his in a specifically Anglican context whereas Daniel appears to eschew a denominational identity.

Based on these data a typology emerges of Anglican prison chaplains as affiliates and disaffiliates. This is not to be seen as a simple binary opposition since some of the affiliates display attitudes characteristic of disaffiliates, towards the hierarchy or COE establishment for example. Neither is it a product or function of worship practice; there are conservative evangelicals and liberal catholics in both types. In this instance the typologies are not tightly bounded but allow for some flexibility and provide a framework for examining the possibility and the nature of chaplains' self-perception as Anglicans.

In the next chapter I examine chaplains' perceptions of the relationship with church hierarchies.

## CHAPTER 10

### 'SOMEWHERE OUT THERE': WORKING WITH AND WITHOUT THE CHURCH

10.1	The bishop's licence	232
10.2	Fractured communications	233
10.3	Episcopal and diocesan support	236
10.4	Episcopal obligations	239
10.5	The constitutional connection	241

Having explored chaplains' self-perception, their roles and the pressures upon those roles, I now detail the episcopal imperative at local, diocesan level and a constitutional role which could enable the expression of religious and humanitarian values at a point where Church and State concerns intersect. Primary sources are again combined with secondary sources, including parliamentary reports.

#### 10.1 The bishop's licence

A focus group member observed that, "Although the Prison Service employs you they can't employ you without the authority of the bishop." That authority derives from the issue of the bishop's licence, identical in every way to the licence issued to parish priests. It contains the invitation to "receive the cure of souls which is both mine and yours," implying both delegation and sharing. Priests promise to use only authorised forms of Anglican service and to adhere to the doctrines of the COE or CIW. For parish clergy this is a public church service; in prisons it is almost always conducted before staff, prisoners and guests. In both cases the promises are made before and to members of the community to be served. As well as an oath of allegiance to the sovereign, the incumbent and the chaplain alike both swear an oath to the bishop and his successors "that I will pay true and canonical obedience to the Bishop of (this diocese) and his successors in all things lawful and honest".

This suggests an effective measure of surveillance, support and sanction since a high degree of formal compliance is implicit in the award of the licence, which implies mutual expectation between bishop, priest and people and posits some kind of active relationship.

In practice, the nature of the relationship between chaplains and their bishops and dioceses, as seen by the chaplains themselves and described by Cedric as “a very, very patchy thing”, is spread across a spectrum extending from almost total disengagement to structured pastoral support and active involvement with the chaplaincy. Most comments tended towards the negative end of the spectrum; since this research is concerned solely with chaplains’ perspectives I have not collected data from bishops or other diocesan officials.

## **10.2 Fractured communications**

Two respondents thought that the weight of responsibility for making contact lay with the chaplain. Angus, a parish priest for over twenty years, implies this:

The bishop has a huge job responding to the needs of the various parishes in his area, a full time job in itself; I would have thought there’s less time for him to be involved in sector ministries..... I think it’s more a case of me finding those links with the diocese as opposed to the diocese finding links with me.

He acknowledges a weight of responsibility and the concomitant pressure on diocesan bishops which, he suggests, makes it incumbent upon the chaplain to seek links rather than waiting for the bishop or his delegate to do so. Juliet appears to agree with this perspective, having found the bishop to be “a good shoulder to cry on” when there were serious tensions within the chaplaincy team: “As far as bishops and archdeacons are concerned, we can’t expect them to come to us so we have to go to them.”

Both Angus and Juliet, however, undermine their initial comments with qualifying riders. Angus remarks that he doesn’t think “a huge trench (*sic*) has been beaten to the prison door by members of the diocese” and Juliet offers the opinion that, “Neither NSMs or chaplains are owned by the Church.

I thought when I came into this job from being a NSM that the Church would take more notice but they didn't." Even chaplains who can appreciate the situation of a bishop manifest a degree of disappointment with the response of the Church to their approaches.

Other respondents display a weary sense of disengagement from their diocese and its bishop. The bleakest assessment came from Colin (9.10): "Somewhere out there is the Church of England; I have no idea where it is but it comes in at Christmas." The sense of distance underlies "somewhere" and the repeated "it" combines cynicism with a sense of alienation arising from his refusal to personalise the Church or its representatives. Ben's sense of separation from bishop and the diocesan hierarchy clearly has personal roots (9.10). He also, however, appreciates the pressures which bishops may experience, though that recognition is coloured by Ben's apparent scepticism about the COE:

I let them know what is going on but they are so busy trying to prop up the structures outside..... with the new faith wing that we have got coming, I have emailed the Bishop with the stuff and "well that sounds very interesting" but actually it has gone no further.

His words "trying to prop up" seem to echo the mood which informs his reference to parish congregations as "the terminally bored".

These observations, seem to indicate that bishops are either unaware of what is done in their name by virtue of their licence or that they do not care very much, although Angus and Juliet acknowledge the effects of a bishop's workload.

Whilst the chaplain swears allegiance to the diocesan bishop it is clear from the data that bishops are not always perceived as offering support to chaplains. As well as the pressures of their diocesan duties or lack of interest, bishops can be thought to fail in giving support where there is a divergence of doctrine. Penny told me:

Both bishops were opposed to the ordination of women so that was also quite tough. For the first few years in the diocese we used to have

annual get-togethers but that all stopped so as prison chaplains we never really got to meet anybody.

Her words show that a woman chaplain's relations with the bishop can be significantly impaired if he holds to an integrity which denies the validity of female ordination.

Two respondents commented on discouraging remarks from bishops about the intention to apply for prison ministry. I have already cited Becky's narrative of "going native" (8.8); Gervase recounts a comparable response: "The bishop knew I wanted to work in prisons but when it came to it he was quite taken aback, that I was actually going to take that step." A bishop's surprise, disappointment even, is unremarkable since parish rather than chapel ministry is still the foundation of the COE and the CIW. Nevertheless, the responses related by Becky and Gervase imply a degree of episcopal disapproval or even distaste. Cedric reflected that:

Singleton Anglicans can feel very isolated from their church if the bishop [or] area dean is not the sort of person who brings you into the centre and recognises you, albeit as a sector minister, having an important role within the local church.

Unlike Angus and Juliet, Cedric (who is an area chaplain) lays the responsibility for making contact – and thus activating support and dialogue – upon the diocesan hierarchy and hints at the physical as well as the social isolation to which a lack of proactive involvement can lead. Cedric speculated that amongst Anglican co-ordinating chaplains "very few would have a good relationship" with diocesan structures or officials. Given the length of Cedric's service and the number of establishments with which he is directly involved, his perspectives are broadly based although entirely personal. A group response emerged, however, in a focus group when one member asserted that, "What we have as prison chaplains is an amazing link with the hierarchy in the Anglican church." Only one chaplain agreed with her, instancing support for STP and Christmas activities from the bishop and the area dean. Other group members variously expressed feelings of disconnection from the COE:

My missis asked me the name of the suffragan Bishop the other day and I haven't got a clue and I haven't met him yet and he is responsible for me.

He has shown absolutely no interest in us whatsoever. The last one did in a kind of.... well I think that it was benevolent but occasionally it came across as malevolent. He certainly had problems with the Prison Service's policy about inclusivity and that kind of thing.

He has expressed entire disinterest (*sic*) in us really; I think that he has just forgotten that we exist, I don't think that it is bad, you know, he just doesn't know.... we are not like sort of there.

There is a lack of rancour and resentment in these comments but they suggest that some bishops, possibly a majority, have lost sight of a group of their licence holders and have made little if any provision to maintain lines of contact. This has to be set against other comments above which place responsibility for contact equally upon the chaplain and others which reveal active support and involvement. These are a small minority.

### **10.3 Episcopal and diocesan support**

I have referred above to "a spectrum which extends from almost total disengagement to structured pastoral support and active involvement with the chaplaincy." The foregoing paragraphs clearly relate to disengagement. I shall now look at the opposite end of the spectrum. I have cited Alexandra's account of the support she received from cathedral staff at her licensing despite her doubts about its appropriateness to the context (9.9). Esther spoke of a more immediately pastoral engagement:

I have intermittent contact with the suffragan, who licensed me, who turned up at our carol service a couple of Christmases ago in civvies. He's anxious to get involved and when I was off sick I had a nice letter from him – and I've also had a visit from the diocesan who was anxious to come and see..... as far as this diocese is concerned they're making the right sort of noises and I certainly feel that I am made to feel a part of the establishment.

Her perception of the direct and on-going involvement of the suffragan and the diocesan bishops suggests to her that both bishops are fulfilling their unifying function by drawing her and the people in her prison into the mainstream of the diocese, in contrast to Ben's experience of the archdeacon

who was too busy to visit even when Ben was seriously ill. Additionally, Esther was visited by the bishop and suffragan of a neighbouring diocese and by an archbishop; both of these dioceses are in the catchment area of Esther's prison.

Even so, Esther hints ("making the right sort of noises") at the difficulties which can attend chaplains' diocesan involvement:

I don't live in the diocese, I actually don't know very many clergy; I'm going to their chrism mass on Maundy Thursday and I'm going in the confident expectation that I shall not see very many clergy.... because we tend to operate in a fairly closed sort of world.

The use of the pronoun "their" is telling in that it indicates a consciousness of physical distance ("I don't live in the diocese") and of actual separation ("a fairly closed sort of world"). This contrasts with Ben's approving remarks about parish clergy in the USA not necessarily living locally (8.1); for him relative anonymity is a positive value whereas for Esther, despite the "right noises", it is an obstacle to closer involvement with the larger body of the church and tradition with which she identifies.

What seems to be more important for Esther is the way that the diocese identified sources of counselling and mentoring for her after an extended absence from work:

The diocese are very good; they take the whole thing of ministerial review quite seriously. I was coming back after my sort of time off and picking up the bits. The prison provided me with someone that I saw for about a year I think, sort of once a week and then to once a month from that. But then [the Dean] came up with someone because I said that I thought I needed some kind of continuing support, some kind of mentoring and he came up with someone that the prison paid for and I saw him once a month for about 6 months..... he also put me in touch with a woman who was actually living in the deanery..... who comes and sees me from time to time..... we go out for lunch and she is actually doing the next ministerial review with me and so I feel that even the diocese are also not quite at arm's length but sort of keeping an eye. I'm not being cast aside.

A remarkable feature of this narrative is the way in which Esther intertwines the actions of the diocesan officials with those of the prison in a rare example

of active co-operation for a chaplain's welfare. She recounts the events and simultaneously reflects upon them.

Becky reveals that even attentive practice by Church officials does not necessarily preclude isolation from Church structures:

Theodora (the archdeacon) is lovely; she was here for my licensing. In fact she is going to come and spend an afternoon with me in a few weeks' time and she will come back around Christmas time. So that is very affirming but to be honest, I mean the parish that I live in there is a lovely vicar there, but I have very few resources left to do anything like go to deanery and all that sort of stuff..... the connection with Anglicanism is very, very tenuous really and it has been all the way through.

Becky's situation is particularly pressing; she has been in post for six months and has recently learned that the prisons in her area are to be clustered and that she that she will serve all three as co-ordinating chaplain. There is currently no Prison Service regional chaplain in her area which is relatively isolated geographically and part of one of the larger dioceses in the COE. Becky's concern is that she cannot sustain an adequate level of ministry without volunteer assistance from the local church community, with whom she feels she has little remaining energy to engage. The apparently cordial and "affirming" relationship with the archdeacon cannot alleviate her situation. Her need, as presented, is for people who will help her to do the job, whereas Esther identifies a lack of opportunity to engage with other people who do the same or comparable jobs, but receives a high degree of effective personal support. In neither case does the pastoral concern of Church officials materially affect their situation; it is only when the officials of church and prison work out a coherent practice that a situation can be materially influenced.

If Esther's diocesan officials provided professional and personal support backed up by the prison, Maurice's suffragan bishop provided extensive, active support for the STP activities sponsored by Maurice in his YOI:

(He) is the only bishop that I have known that wanted to come in Christmas Day with me and for the past 4 years he has never missed a Christmas morning..... And yet he is so good, he knows the way that

I do worship and holy Eucharist and he is so supportive and so kind and understanding and he knows what I am up to with Sycamore and he is hugely supportive of Sycamore, hugely supportive. He has found resources and funding for us and the way that he has allowed me to engage with the criminal justice group.

This bishop is not, as Esther and Colin indicate each in their own way, the only one to visit prisons at Christmas but he has facilitated a working link between the professional, the chaplain, and a lay interest group in the diocese so that there is external support, whatever form that may take. Maurice sent me an address given by the bishop to assembled judges in the Royal Courts of Justice in October 2011, in which he said: “On Christmas Day I will be going to [a] Young Offenders Institution..... The best Prison Chaplain in the country is there who on that day gets a Bishop and a black Pentecostal choir .....together.”

This exuberant endorsement of Maurice’s ministry, which is a prelude to a theological reflection on RJ, was made at national level to the highest echelons of criminal justice professionals. It can be read as an expression of support, direct involvement and affirmation within an informed and potentially influential group.

Maurice’s bishop, along with Esther’s and Alexandra’s (who minister in the same diocese), appears to be at the extreme of practical engagement and active support. Other Church officials possibly share in varying degrees the attitude of Colin’s bishop: “I can’t remember the exact words he used but he couldn’t have made it plainer .....‘My role as the bishop is to support the parish clergy. I regard you as getting your support from elsewhere.’” (9.10) Other research might show this to be a plausible and defensible stand but the fact of the bishop’s licence remains.

#### **10.4 Episcopal obligations**

While the bishop’s licence enjoins loyalty and obedience upon the chaplain, it has, nevertheless, to be read in the light of responsibilities laid upon bishops themselves at their ordination and consecration to be a sign of unity and a

shepherd to all in their care; the pastoral image recurs throughout the service.

As the archbishop addresses the congregation at the beginning of the service, he proclaims not only the pastoral function but ministry to those who live at or beyond the limits of the church and society:

As chief pastors, it is their duty to share with their fellow presbyters the oversight of the Church, speaking in the name of God and expounding the gospel of salvation. With the Shepherd's love.....they are to have a special care for the poor, the outcast and those who are in need. They are to seek out those who are lost and lead them home with rejoicing, declaring the absolution and forgiveness of sins to those who turn to Christ. [*The Ordination & Consecration of a Bishop*, 2012]

Later passages in the service refer specifically to people in prison; one of the intercessions is: "For the poor and the hungry, for the homeless and the oppressed, for all prisoners and captives....." whilst at the anointing of the new bishop (an optional part of the service) the words are equally unequivocal: "May God, who anointed the Christ with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, anoint and empower you to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to set free those who are oppressed..."

Data from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2007, 31-35) and the Ministry of Justice itself (2012, 7-16) confirm that people in prison are among the most disadvantaged in the country. The work of Wacquant proposes systematic incarceration as a component of "the reconfigured system of instruments for managing deregulated labor, ethnoracial hierarchy, and urban marginality." (2008, 33)

The consecration service, then, uses explicitly pastoral imagery (shepherds and sheep) and contains two specific references to people who are in prison and in need of a targeted ministry. It is therefore surprising to find that the responsibilities implied both by the issuing of the bishop's licence to chaplains and by the terms of the bishop's own consecration are not more consistently and visibly catered for. This is not to say that the diocesan bishop himself (necessarily male in England at the time of writing) has to

discharge this responsibility personally but that it is incumbent upon him to ensure that appropriate and effective arrangements are in place for a ministry to those in prison in active collaboration with fellow clergy. Chaplains perceive this ministry in diverse ways; many perceive it not to be happening at all. Without such a blend of oversight and support, the bishop's licence is little more than a bureaucratic formality.

### **10.5 The constitutional connection**

English bishops also exercise a constitutional role since twenty six of them sit in the House of Lords. It might be argued that these twenty six have a representational ministry for the Church of England, much of whose law is also state law. One bishop is identified to fulfil the non-statutory role of Bishop to Prisons. This responsibility was established in 1985 when the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, asked Robert Hardy, then Bishop of Lincoln, to take on the extra role of Bishop to Prisons so that prison issues and the theological values around them might have an authoritative voice in parliament (recounted to me by Hardy in conversation in 2009). Hardy visited every prison establishment during his six years in office, attended conferences and chaplain selection boards (including my own.) While this is not an obviously prisoner-facing or directly involved function, it is more than a voice for Anglican prison chaplains, as is clear from the contributions to debates not only by the Bishop to Prisons but by other prelates. Hardy told me that he discharged his role with a vicarious Anglican attitude on behalf of all people in prisons, not only Anglicans, not only Christians.

A documented instance of this was related in the Lords debate on Wandsworth Prison on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2000. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons had recently produced a severely critical report following his team's unannounced inspection of HMP Wandsworth. In debate Hardy highlighted two issues, of which the first was a cross-establishment concern about the treatment of mentally ill prisoners, especially in the segregation unit. His second point related to the chaplaincy:

Secondly, I want to express concern about the chaplaincy at Wandsworth. Sir David (Ramsbotham) refers to concerns about the facilities for worship for prisoners of all faiths and denominations in the vulnerable prisoner unit. I am told that the chapel is now used during the week by a charity running experimental social drama and teaching programmes about relationships. While one applauds the provision of such programmes, it means that during the week the chapel cannot be used for a service, groups, or for individual inmates with a chaplain to pray on the day of a funeral - of a close friend or a relative - that the prisoner may not attend.... The fact that the mosque can only be reached through the chapel makes respect for sacred space for all traditions of faith difficult and causes concern. (Lords Hansard text 16/02/2000, columns 1313-1314)

The Bishop is fulfilling a ministry on behalf of all faith adherents and chaplains and, although speaking about specific arrangements in a specific prison, he nevertheless makes a more overarching point of principle about freedom of religious observance. He next criticizes the arrangements by which men had to “sign up” for chapel attendance and might be prevented from attending: “There is an attitude that the prisoner must apply and that worship is a kind of recreation, not a right. Clearly, that is an unsatisfactory state of affairs.”

In preparation for this debate Hardy had alerted the Bishop of Southwark, Tom Butler, to visit Wandsworth the previous evening (confirmed to me by Hardy and in correspondence with Butler 2010):

A diocesan bishop is in a privileged position. He can turn up at the gatehouse of any prison in his diocese unannounced and has the right of admission. It is rarely used... I thought it right to turn up at the gate of Wandsworth prison at six o'clock and ask to be taken to the segregation unit. To be honest I was expecting to be depressed by what I found. On the contrary, I was much encouraged. . (Lords Hansard 16/02/2000. Column 1320)

The significance of this is that the diocesan bishop was able to feed into government discourse an account of conditions as he perceived them to be only hours before. The concern is pastoral in the widest sense, not specifically religious.

Butler was able to reflect upon the difficulties and obstacles in the way of chaplains who complain about conditions. He instanced a case of “a young prison chaplain” who had complained about conditions in the segregation unit of another prison:

An accusation of sexual misbehaviour by the chaplain was then made and he was suspended. The police were eventually informed and within a short time came to the conclusion that the accusation had been concocted. Nevertheless, it took several months before the chaplain’s suspension was lifted and he was then moved to another prison..... I was closely involved in the case and have no doubt that the whole episode was engineered in order to move someone who was perceived to be a troublesome member of staff. Will that chaplain complain again about anything he sees which disturbs him? I doubt it. Will he keep his head down and just get on with his job without complaint? Very probably. (Lords Hansard 16/02/2000. Column 1320)

One respondent had experienced even more oppressive consequences of questioning abuse; it cannot be revealed without betraying his identity. Between them Hardy and Butler raised in a constitutional context, issues of humanity and integrity which were both generally and religiously pastoral. This is comparable with a debate in January 2001 following HMCIP’s anxiety over excessive use of force by outside staff searching HMP Blantyre House, during the course of which the chapel was broken into and suffered damage. The Bishop of St Alban’s, Christopher Herbert, contributed to a complex debate about issues of trust and rehabilitation by reflecting upon the function of the prison chapel and, by association, of the chaplain.

A chapel – not least one which had made separate provision for Muslim prisoners – is not just “a.n. other room”. It is a place where the sacred is honoured, a place for prayer, the sacraments and worship. It is a place where people in need can think their deepest and most private thoughts. It is not sacred just because it represents the presence of Almighty God, although, of course, it does so; it is also sacred because it represents the deepest levels of our humanity. To trample so wantonly and brutally over a sacred place is to trespass upon the holy and upon the human. If chapels in prisons are not honoured, then nothing and no-one else will be. (Lords Hansard 17 Jan 2001, columns 1170-1171)

He deplored the lack of consultation with the chaplain and asked for an assurance that “in the future the Prison Service will be absolutely clear about

what may or may not happen in relation to chapels in prisons.” No response is recorded.

The speech is still significant, however, because it marries secular and religious values and is a point of intersection between the legitimate concerns of Church and State. As Hardy referred to Muslim concerns, so Herbert refers beyond Anglican concerns to, by implication, those of no specified faith. This representation in the public forum of Church and faiths behind bars seems to show Anglicanism as most typically itself, speaking for all in its purview, yet it is precisely this aspect of apparent Anglican primacy that academics and other faith leaders had questioned. (9.4). It is also fair to ask whether or how far this voice in the court of parliament is in any way observably or quantifiably causal in bringing about change, or whether the constitutional role is as patchily discharged and efficacious as the diocesan responsibility. Writing about England and New South Wales, Macarthur observes that: “The church entertains and promotes the idea that it is reaching into areas of need, but little evaluation seems to have been done on whether this effort is in any way effective, or indeed valuable.” (Macarthur 2003, 338) For Macarthur (337-8) the chaplain’s presence in the prison is symbolic “even though he is largely irrelevant to the prisoner” and it is “his” presence that is useful to the state; Macarthur expects it to remain so. This is simplistic and inaccurate since it ignores the work of the Mothers’ Union in prisons and more widely, the Children’s Society and other more recent developments in the wake of *Faith in the City* (1985); it fails to register the local links between church congregations and prisons in some places, facilitated by bishops and chaplains. Chaplains may occupy a liminal, even peripheral, position in prisons (and, indeed, the church) but this does not mean that they are irrelevant as Macarthur asserts.

Social and secular issues can be thought to have raised religion as an issue of human rights with which the Prison Service has engaged both as a cross-service policy and through chaplaincy. This does not – and should not - mean that the Anglican chaplain has regained or retained any kind of primacy. It does, though, mean that an opportunity exists, given the continuing presence

of chaplains, for bishops as church leaders to engage with prison chaplaincy both at local and corporate level. There is little sign of such a strategy emerging.

One retired bishop has affirmed the value which he perceives to inhere in chaplaincy: "It is possible that more people will come into contact with a minister of religion through chaplaincy than through encountering the 'vicar' in the place where they live." (Saxbee 2009, 89) He portrays chaplains as "points of contact with a dimension of faith and spirituality which still matter to people, even when contact with organized religion is little or non-existent." (2009,106) A comparable stance is suggested by Slater (2012,313). It seems strange that more Anglican bishops have not recognized and espoused such a view, if only out of concern for the future of the Church, to say nothing of the pastoral responsibility laid upon them at their consecration.

Swift (2009,173) has characterized NHS chaplains as living within "multiple marginalities", in an exile "tacitly fostered by the Church" through negative parish experiences. I would characterize prison chaplains as living in the border country between two institutions, liminal in both. No respondent of mine places themselves at the centre of the prison's purpose and operation but, on the other hand, only three (Alexandra, Esther and Maurice) locate themselves anywhere near the operation of their diocese. Yet it might be argued that chaplains' ministry not only reaches more people than the parish priest's but that it is consistent with "fresh expressions" of church. The COE book of that name nowhere mentions chaplaincy. It may be, as Swift (2009, 173) and a few of my respondents say, that chaplains should themselves do more to "integrate their experience and theology with a vision of how chaplaincy might develop". The willingness and availability of bishops or their representatives to listen and respond is perceived by most to be, at best, limited. Respondents seemed to accept this without resentment. One wonders, indeed, how far chaplains would welcome direct involvement, even if that were possible.

The episcopacy may be said, then, to face two associated functions in prisons. Facing towards the prison, it has a pastoral responsibility towards prisoners which should be shared with chaplains. As an institution within government, a powerful manifestation of the COE's established status, it is able to assert humanitarian and religious values in the wider discourse of criminal justice. Chaplains are not easily able to assess the latter. Some of their perceptions about pastoral involvement suggest that it is, in Cedric's words "a very, very patchy thing." Over half my respondents viewed diocesan relations negatively, depicting themselves as isolated from the church mainstream. Under these circumstances it is not surprising if some chaplains come to identify more with the prison, where they may be peripheral but at least have quotidian contact, than the COE; the subtext to responses suggests that chaplains seem able to maintain stability between the two differing gravitational forces, to be on the threshold of both Church and prison. Nevertheless it is difficult not to conclude that the established church is failing in its declared ministry to "the poor, the outcast and those who are in need" because its hierarchy fails to achieve consistent engagement with carceral issues both at the centre of government and at diocesan level.

Stoltz (1978) emphasized the dangers of separation between church and chaplains, stressing the need for close supportive links between them, while Ford (2011) stresses the need for such ministry to be informed by theology. All too often the COE and CIW appear to abandon their licensed chaplains to negotiate a position in each prison from which they can engage with and minister to those most excluded from the mainstream and those who work with them.

## CHAPTER 11

### ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1	Introduction	247
11.2	The value of the research	248
11.3	The diverse audiences	248
	11.3.1 The churches	249
	11.3.2 HMPS directorate, Chaplaincy headquarters and chaplains	252
	11.3.3 Researchers both academic and practitioner	253
11.4	Relationality	254
11.5	Conclusions	256
11.6	Further research	257
	11.6.1 General	257
	11.6.2 Chaplains as reflective practitioners and researchers	258
	11.6.3 What do faith communities think of chaplains?	258
	11.6.4 Chaplains, change and managers	259
11.7	Coda	259

#### 11.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis shows how an interweaving of theology and sociology was developed from the guiding research question, “What do Anglican prison chaplains think they are doing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?”(1.1) The responses and reflections, frequently in storied form (3.2) are a product of convergent theories, the “living human document” and the strain of ethnography, founded upon attention to individuals in their human, spatial and temporal relationships (4.6.1-4). I make the suggestion that chaplains can be seen effectively both as researchers in the ethnographic process and as respondents in relation to an external researcher in the sense that “such reflexive dialogues have worked to specify the discourse of the informants as

well as that of the ethnographer...transforming the “cultural” text...into a speaking subject, who sees as well as is seen” (Clifford 1986, 11); associated practitioner/researcher issues are raised in 3.1.7. I accept the qualification implicit in Clifford’s observation that, “insiders studying their own culture offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are *empowered and restricted* in unique ways,” (Clifford 1986, 9 my emphasis).

## **11.2 The value of the research**

The value lies both in its originality and in its relevance for multiple audiences. The concept of originality needs to be defined; there is an increasing literature around chaplaincy though very little of book or thesis length (Woodward 1998, Swift 2009, Becci 2012, Todd 2013ii). The present work is, so far, unique in its combining of subject matter, Anglican prison chaplains, its theological paradigm, the “living human document”, and its methodology, ethnography. I posit Anglican prison ministry as a fractured version of practical theology in which the ethnographer supplies missing opportunities for reflection by respondents and himself reflects both upon their practice and his own. In this sense ethnography gives voice to the living human document and makes a bridge between practitioner and researcher. A further product of chaplains reflecting upon their work is that the polyvocal text is amenable to reading both as a PT document and as a contribution to the diverse sociology of work and occupations such as Becker (1963), Atkinson (2006) and Fine (1996 & 2007).

It differs from other ethnographically informed studies by being an ethnography in its essence, distinct from chaplaincy studies which use ethnography as a component in a broader repertoire of reference and data collection.

I next consider its value to different audiences.

## **11.3 The diverse audiences**

I identify three main audiences for this work though some conclusions should be heeded by all of them. What they are offered is the reflection, theological,

moral and social by chaplains, enabled by this ethnographic endeavour but normally unavailable to the chaplains. Ethnography should not generalize or aggregate so I have included “minority” voices as well as more concerted ones. The audiences are:

- Policy makers in the Church of England and the Church in Wales at national and diocesan level
- HMPS directorate, Chaplaincy headquarters and chaplains
- Researchers both academic and practitioner

### **11.3.1 The churches**

i Reflections covered a wide spectrum of theological, ecclesiological, social and sociological matters. Chaplains evinced degrees of alienation, sometimes occasioned by elegant distaste and hostility from their mainstream church, as in “a proper job” and “going native” (8.5). Mostly, however, they felt neglected (10.2) though some acknowledged their peripheral situation and a possible duty to initiate contact. Unlike the RC and Methodist churches, neither the COE nor the CIW has a public statement of policy on prison chaplaincy. Diocesan practice varies wildly (10.2); after 200 years the Anglican churches in England and Wales have no coherent view of what it means to be a chaplain, certainly not one that is communicated to the chaplains themselves. It is not the case that bishops necessarily have to initiate and sustain contact personally; their obligation is to ensure that contact is kept (10.4).

This is not simply a matter of routine mechanics of communication. Most models of PT emphasise the central importance of reflection to enrich knowledge and to inform subsequent actions and events (1.2). The churches are missing out on the insights and thoughts of clergy who, in the course of a week, possibly meet more non-church people than clergy in mainstream churches. More than that, most of the people they meet are men, the gender conspicuous by their general absence from churches except in the upper, ordained echelons. The churches therefore are cut off from theological

insights into the lives and actions of some of the most deprived, abused and uneducated in society. Prison chaplains surely have accumulated wisdom to offer the church about sin, guilt and forgiveness – if the churches have ears to hear.

ii       Hancocks, Sherbourne & Swift (2008) ask about NHS chaplains, “Are they refugees?” and adduce a number of factors which might have propelled chaplains out of the mainstream churches. I did not encounter this; indeed many respondents clung to a rather quaint model of parish ministry to illustrate their prison practice. But I was able to discern a significantly sized group whom I labelled as disaffiliates from the COE. Most telling, perhaps, is the extent of chaplains’ reluctance to identify themselves as Anglican. The identity is welcomed by a few (Penny, Charlie 9.9); for others, Anglican identity seems to be a default position which causes discomfort (Alexandra, Iain, Becky 9.9). Others seem to disaffiliate from the COE because denominationalism seems irrelevant, for personal reasons or following negative experience of the local hierarchy (Ben 9.10). A few spoke appreciatively of senior diocesan clergy, notably Esther and Maurice (both 10.3), but convinced affiliates were in a small minority. Anglican pastoral and liturgical practice is famously diverse but the COE might want to notice that a sizeable number of its sector clergy are drifting away from outright Anglican allegiance.

iii       Fieldwork observation and chaplains’ responses (Pauline, Esther, Barbara, Ben) made it clear that they feel themselves to be in the van of inter-faith co-operation, another area in which churches might usefully listen to prison chaplains. Relations with other Christian denominations are less exemplary; this seems to result from clerics’ self-perception of their role. The role of RC chaplain was effectively questioned by Mgr Malachy Keegan, the principal RC chaplain, (4.5.4.i). Keegan withdrew from the national Chaplaincy Council, favouring an associative model of chaplaincy over a generic Christian (arguably Anglican) one, which he perceived HMPS to enforce. A letter to all RC chaplains from the deputy DG in July 2010 had reiterated the principles of working across faith boundaries but with respect

for other traditions. This restated a community model as opposed to an exclusive associational model. Nevertheless, Keegan raised legitimate questions about models of being chaplain. These resurface in the ways that one or two Anglicans (George, Claudia, Roger) reflect on their Muslim colleagues' pastoral attitudes. Even in the most co-operative and genial chaplaincies there is little evidence of a comprehensive theology or statement of pastoral ethics. The nearest approach to one that I have encountered occurred in a licensing service in 2013. It recognises this involvement and includes these words, spoken by a member of the chaplaincy team:

Her Majesty's Prison Chaplaincy is committed to serving the needs of prisoners, staff and religious traditions by engaging with all human experience. (Name), will you work collaboratively with us, respecting the integrity of each tradition and discipline?

iv The COE carries an exceptional weight of social and cultural capital through the regard still accorded to its clergy (Ben, Dennis, Tom, Ben) and through the residual signs of its established status, the headship of the monarch and representative bishops in the House of Lords. This capital is underspent. Bishops have on occasions advanced the cause of prisons and chaplains (10.5) but a larger opportunity is being missed. It concerns the prophetic nature of prison ministry, differently perceived by different chaplains (Adam, Robin 4.1, Dennis *Appendix 4*). Chaplains who have acted as whistle blowers have suffered for it (5.2 & 10.5) so it is perhaps unrealistic to expect individual chaplains to behave like Old Testament prophets. Even the record of concerted interventions is not promising - as the Catholic bishops of Ireland have found (2.2). Nevertheless, Anglican bishops in the House of Lords are sufficiently well placed and well protected to act prophetically in raising the issues that their chaplains in prisons know about, like the reduction of the core week, overcrowding, lack of access to improvement facilities, the problems which face women prisoners, to say nothing of the routine ignoring of chaplaincy by Prison Service managers and the failure in a few establishments to observe the basic legal requirement of appointing - not simply identifying - an Anglican chaplain.

v Shamefully, there are still isolated examples of institutionalised church misogyny spilling over into prison chaplaincy to compound the routine though diminishing sexism encountered from staff on wings and landings (7.8). It appears from most, but not all, respondents that HMPS has largely dealt with this far more effectively than the COE. In the case of ordained women chaplains such bigotry impugns their womanhood since priestliness is held by some to inhere only in male bodies. There were no reports of physical harassment; instances of sexist abuse were few but powerfully expressed.

### **11.3.2 HMPS directorate, Chaplaincy headquarters and chaplains**

There is a legal requirement in the Prison Act of 1952 for the appointment of an Anglican cleric or reader as chaplain to each prison; theoretically this over-rides the authority of Prison Service Orders and Instructions which have no formal legal standing (Loucks 2000, 7) but are policy-derived directives to prisons. This being the case, it is strange that prisons can operate apparently indefinitely without an Anglican chaplain; when seeking respondents I was told by one chaplaincy, “We haven’t had an Anglican chaplain for three years or so.” As a retired chaplain I have had to provide Sunday cover in a category B local where there had been no chaplain for a year or so. Inquiries two years later reveal that such is still the case.

Chaplains make inputs into several areas of prison life; some, like Barbara and Roger sit on every prison committee while most are involved at least with staff welfare and preventing suicide – I was a staff trainer in this area. The range of inputs is not reflected in MOJ and NOMS documents which, like a number of prison managers, ignore chaplaincy altogether unless to confuse religion with racial diversity, also a frequent misunderstanding in HMCIP reports. The suspicion is that HMPS managers are reluctant to own chaplains either through ignorance or embarrassment recalling Claudia’s comment that “the Governor’s too bloody stupid.” A number of other respondents observed that governors “don’t get chaplaincy.” The effect of this is that, while two chaplains (Barbara and Ben) couldn’t wait to get to work every day, several

respondents appeared to be alienated both from the church and from their prison. They seem able to carry on through the trust reposed in them by prisoners and staff, and through their own resilience but, as Becky observed wearily “It’s hard...it’s lonely”. This thesis or a version of it might help chaplains in the field to assess their own situation. It might even encourage some to undertake small scale research projects or inquiries of their own. The effect could even be to enable their own reflection and so mend the broken circle (11.2) of this particular version of practical theology.

I say more about relations between chaplains and managers below.

### **11.3.3 Researchers both academic and practitioner**

The current prison chaplaincy discourse effectively began in a university with the publication of Beckford and Gilliat (1998). It has been further developed by Gilliat-Ray and Todd, the former primarily concerned with Muslim chaplaincy though by implication all chaplaincy, and the latter with generic chaplaincy. Other contributions have focussed on processual or descriptive accounts rather than analysis of lived experience (Legood 1999, Threllfall-Holmes & Newitt 2011); a brief exception to this is a RC perspective (Hughes 2011, 71-74). An inadequate paper by Hunt (2011) contains observations by the Anglican chaplain of a prison all too easily identified as atypical and from which Hunt generalizes on slender evidence. There is a need, then, for self-reflection by chaplains, and for research, both in universities and within prison chaplaincy. This should contextualize the current, developing role of the Anglican chaplain both as its profile is equalised with those of other faiths and as it aligns completely with the managerial ethos of HMPS. Such inquiry could and should be conducted through a methodology of interwoven practical theology and ethnography. A more broadly based study of this kind might contribute to the sociology of institutional change by introducing a transcendental theme growing out of religious practice. A remark by an imam in a focus group which commented on the reluctance of mosques to become involved with prison issues is consonant with my own data concerning discontinuities between religious

bodies and their chaplains in prisons. Research on this apparent disconnection would help to identify ways in which such fractures, where they exist, might be mended.

#### **11.4 Relationality**

Most forms of work and occupation are done in relation, generally to other people and certainly in relation to place and time; the data show that it is at least as true of chaplains as it is of meteorologists in the National Weather Service (Fine 2007, 31-39) or the company of Welsh National Opera in rehearsal (Atkinson 2006, 105-136). In chapters 4-10, chaplains reveal the extent to which their ministry is co-constructed (or occasionally not) with prisoners, prison officers, governors, the Church, the place itself and a variety of time dimensions. From this interaction emerges a version of chaplaincy peculiar to that place, that time and those people in despite of centralised policy and practice directives. The statutory nature of the Anglican chaplain's appointment is not, therefore, an indicator of their location in relation to the institutional hierarchy or the whole range of tasks undertaken.

But this susceptibility to a central bureaucracy and compliance with its directives (not requests or advice) reminds us that chaplains live permanently in someone else's house, encountering its residents and staff on a daily basis and working out with them a plausible *modus operandi*. This residency, however, is partly on the terms of their attachment to another institution so that the challenge is to maintain a presence which is plausible and acceptable in both. The data from chaplains' reflections and words suggest that most are more adapted to the bureaucracy of the Prison Service than the looser, frequently invisible structures of the churches.

This leads to the question of working relations with governors. Some chaplains related difficulty with officers and I was able to observe the reality of this in some establishments; a generalisation would be that a majority of chaplains seem to work effectively with a majority of officers. Since both groups conduct much of their work on wings, landings and in cells they are usually highly visible to each other so that there may be shared

understandings and even mutual respect. I have admired staff skilfully defusing dangerous situations and have, in turn, been asked to meet with an agitated prisoner and persuade him to surrender a suspected weapon. (I did!) But a number of chaplains relate different and difficult relationships with governors ranging from non-understanding (Heather) to allegations of victimisation. Henry talked with bitterness about what he saw as harassment and exclusion still affected by it to the point that he felt the need to whisper, as if being eavesdropped upon. Pauline also spoke of victimisation through the appraisal system, managing to get it overturned and subsequently suffering a breakdown. These are extreme examples and they are balanced by other more positive accounts: Ben is clearly eyes and ears for his governor while Esther was a trusted confidante for her governing governor as his marriage disintegrated ("I'm like a kind of a sump" 5.4) Many chaplains, however, sounded uneasy in their relationships with their governors. Why should this be? It was suggested to me that governors usually work in offices rather than on open wings so that they and chaplains are less visible to each other. I suggest another possibility; it is that of competing ideologies and the language through which they are expressed or, to put it differently, a clash between the new and the traditional with both ideologies sometimes expressed in the same linguistic register (Pattison 1997, 59-73).

I do not comment here on chaplains' reflections about working with prisoners since the issues are many and various and to do so would be to ignore Marcus's warning that, "generalisation from ethnography is a classic problem, and is even more saliently so in ethnography sensitive to political economy, but to adopt methodologists' rhetoric is to weaken the suggestive power of ethnography," (Marcus 1986, 175 n7). The foregoing sections in this chapter have not sought to generalise so much as to reaffirm the individuality of voices and their individual lines, sometimes in harmony with others, at other times dissonant and contradictory.

My voice in all of this is perhaps that of accompanist rather than director, supporting some lines, inviting others in and, in turn, being invited to be part of the whole concert. And so to the last movement.

## 11.5 Conclusions

All these conclusions are grounded in the text worked by ethnography from the living text.

The Church of England and the Church in Wales do not emerge with credit. Too many chaplains think that they have been in effect abandoned and left to get on with it as best they can. There are a few shining exceptions but connections between mainstream Anglican churches and prison chaplains are arbitrary and inconsistent. Despite having archbishops (Rowan Williams and Barry Morgan) with a practical interest in prisons and chaplaincy the respective governing bodies have not seen fit so much as to take a public stance on prisons and criminal justice. The COE has lines of influence into government but its commission on prisons and prisoners seems to have lapsed since the active days of the 1960s. Successive bishops to prisons have been assiduous in supporting chaplains and raising issues in the HOL but this is not the same as an organised strategy for raising prison issues in the public forum of government.

It is not surprising, then, that chaplains sound as if they identify more with the prison than with the church and, when observed, often appear to do so, especially in the company of prisoners and officers. But even in this setting there is a strong element of chance; chaplains can be drawn into the structure and intimately quotidian activity of the prison if they have a governor or line manager who is supportive. They certainly exist, as I discovered in two or three prisons where the governing governors went out of their way to articulate appreciation of “their” chaplains and as I was fortunate enough to experience in my own chaplaincy postings. Not all chaplains are so fortunate and it is possible for them to be kept at arm’s length both by the prison and the church. Surprisingly, many seem to flourish in this midway position between the monolithic agencies of church and prison, attempting to make sense of the one to the other but not certain whether or not they are being listened to.

In particular, the Church of England and the Church in Wales could and should do much more to “own” their chaplains with all that implies about both support and censure (of, for instance, chaplains who do not celebrate the Eucharist and do not baptise.) The churches should find imaginative ways to locate prison chaplains distinctively, though with no special privilege, within the diocesan group and at national level. The Roman Catholic church holds an annual residential conference for its prison chaplains. Likewise Muslim chaplains gather together for reflection. The established church does nothing, yet it has the resources to make similar provision for its chaplains in prisons. This can be construed as a moral imperative since a nominally Anglican ministry is being conducted by some 130 clergy who cost the church nothing yet who, in group size, equate with a small diocese. This is strange conduct in a church seeking “fresh expressions” of itself.

Prison chaplaincy can all too easily become an action packed ministry divided between high tempo reactive encounters and fulfilling the bureaucratic demands of a complex managerial system. This leaves no room for considered theological or moral reflection which would inform and enrich subsequent encounters and which similarly inform and enrich the churches’ thinking and theology. It is wasteful, short sighted and arrogant to suppose that the churches have nothing to learn from their prison chaplains; equally it is disturbing to conclude that they apparently have little to offer in return.

## **11.6 Further research**

### **11.6.1 General**

Pattison (1994,47) observes that, “the human sciences provide analytic tools for an understanding of society – the locus of God’s saving activity – which are not available in theology itself.” Further research in this area must, like this thesis, draw upon sociological and theological theory and practice. In the following three areas a methodology is called for which is amenable to practitioners and researchers, both in prisons and universities and where, as here, the two coincide. The methodology which I have developed in this thesis, combining a specific strand of practical theology with ethnography,

may serve as a basis for future research in two of the three areas. The three audiences identified in *11.3* are addressed though a one-to-one correlation is not intended and the areas are not necessarily isolated from each other.

### **11.6.2 Chaplains as reflective practitioners and researchers**

Research might be undertaken to discover if and how chaplains reflect upon their practice and how this affects or fails to affect subsequent practice with the aim of establishing patterns and opportunities for such reflection to take place. My own methodology in which the chaplain is seen both as ethnographer and respondent seems appropriate here. Since my research has shown the extent to which chaplains story their reflections this would be an effective stimulus to mutual or peer reflection. The theological significance of this would be at least a part completion of the fractured pastoral cycle.

In a period of stringent and continuing cuts in prison budgets it is unrealistic to expect HMPS or private contractors to resource this, except in making time available. The COE and CIW between them have the human and physical resources to support and facilitate this pastoral enrichment, the lack of which diminishes the ministry of chaplains and impoverishes the theology of the churches. Many Anglican chaplains are aware of being in the vanguard of multi-faith working but, although there are examples of informal theological discussion, there are, as yet, no signs of a cohering dialectic. The established church should be well placed to encourage this dialogue and might even discover a prophetic voice in the face of probable opposition both from within and from without. A fruit of reflection and research could and should be to strongly encourage the faith communities to assess their effective attitudes to their chaplains and the issues of sin, wrong-doing and forgiveness with which chaplains daily engage.

### **11.6.3 What do faith communities think of chaplains?**

This would be a necessary forerunner to *11.6.2*. It is as important to know what the people in the mosque or the church think as it is their leaders, both local and national. Such a project does not inevitably lend itself to ethnographical methods and raises different questions of methodology. The

present situation is more complex than it appears from a distance since indifference in one place is balanced by activity in another, which might include Mothers' Union members running a prison crèche or congregational groups attending Sunday services in prison. Such variability mirrors the inconsistency at episcopal level. The aim of this research would be to establish a dialogic thread which might extend through informing to understanding. It would focus on the mainstream church rather than chaplains or prisons.

#### **11.6.4 Chaplains, change and managers**

This research focusses on chaplains and prisons in a corporate managerial context. In part it is a response to the studied avoidance and occasional antipathy which seems to characterise relations between some chaplains and some governors, occasionally leading to fear and breakdown. The apparent reluctance of MOJ and NOMS documents in print and on line to acknowledge the presence and contribution of chaplains is mirrored in the distancing of chaplains and chaplaincy in some prisons. The national absorption of chaplains into the single pay and grading structure of HMPS has, on the decision of individual governing governors, meant that chaplains have either become managers themselves or become one of the directly managed, possibly by a secular administrator.

There are two aspects to be researched here. One is the way this impacts upon chaplains' ministry and the extent to which it threatens to redefine chaplains and emphasise conformity over difference. The second aspect is the sense in which two theologies are perceived to collide, metonymically evidenced by translation of language from the one into the other so that visions and missions might appear to compete with each other. Such a project opens a space for cooperation between chaplain practitioners and external researchers.

#### **11.7 Coda**

My work is a first in another, poignant way: at the end of many of these interviews chaplains thanked me for giving them the chance to talk and for

listening. Ethnography became therapy. In this way a version of practical theology was constructed between us. But it should not have to rely on one interested researcher. Churches and chaplains have gifts for each other; this ethnography has revealed what they might be, where strength lies and where hurt waits for healing.

This thesis began with a vignette looking inwards. It ends with a vignette looking outwards; a church leader and a chaplain stand together on the threshold both of the prison and of the wider world. The chain and collar which each wears can, like the boundary fence, imply constraint. But they can also signal new possibilities and new opportunities as above; they also



suggest a shared identity overlaying different roles and a mutual crossing of thresholds between the prison and the world for which the Anglican churches assume responsibility.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Ethical approval

Cardiff School of Social Sciences  
Director Professor Huw Beynon  
Ysgol Gwybodaeth Cymdeithasol Caerdydd  
Cylleudydd Yr Athro Huw Beynon



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23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009

Our ref: SRBC/533

Peter Phillips  
PhD Programme  
RELIG

Dear Peter

Your project entitled "*The role of the Anglican prison chaplain in the 21st Century*" has now been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University following its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and you can now commence the project.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Tom Hoebek-Jones  
Chair of the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee



Ministry of  
**JUSTICE**

National Offender  
Management Service

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Peter Phillips  
7 St Lucia Close  
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BS7 0XS

6<sup>th</sup> February 10  
BNAC

Research Title: The role of the Anglican prison chaplain in England and Wales in the twenty first century.\*

Reference No: 03/10

Establishments: As per the application. \*All establishments in South West area and Wales. Selected establishments in other areas across all categories.\*

Dear Revd Phillips,

Further to your application to undertake research in HM Prison Service and our letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 10. The NRC is pleased to grant approval in principle for your research, subject to compliance with the conditions outlined below:

- Approval from the Governor of each Establishment you wish to research in. Please note that NRC approval does not guarantee access to Establishments, access is at the discretion of the Governor and subject to local operational factors and pressures.
- Compliance with all security requirements.
- Compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Informing and updating the NRC promptly of any changes made to the planned methodology.
- It being made clear to participants verbally and in writing that they may withdraw from the research at any point and that this will not have adverse impact on them.
- The NRC receiving an electronic copy of any research report submitted as a result of the research with an attached executive summary of the product of the research.
- The NRC receiving an electronic copy of any papers submitted for publication based on this research at the time of submission and at least one month in advance of the publication.
- Researchers are under a duty to disclose certain information to the Prison Service. This includes behaviour that is against prison rules and can be adjudicated against (see Section 51 of the Prison Rules 1999), illegal acts, and behaviour that is harmful to the research participant (e.g. intention to self-harm or complete suicide). Researchers should make research participants aware of this requirement.
- HMP staff - Official permission is required from HR Policy and Reward Group in Headquarters before any member of staff, serving or retired, may publish any material relating to the work of the Prison Service, the NOMS Agency, the Ministry of Justice or other Government departments. Permission should be sought from Colin Harrett, Deputy Director, HR Policy. Colin can be contacted at [colin.harrett@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.harrett@hmps.gsi.gov.uk) or on 030 7217 6453. The rules are set out in Chapter 19 (Conduct) of the HMPs Staff Handbook.

Once the research is completed, and received by the NRC Co-ordinator, it will be lodged at the Prison Service College Library.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix 2 Fieldwork documents

### a. Fieldwork document 1

Dear

**PhD research project:**

**The role of the Anglican prison chaplain in England and Wales in the twenty first century.**

I'm writing to invite you to take part in this independent, self funded research project which I am undertaking at Cardiff University and the Centre for Chaplaincy Studies at St Michael's College, Llandaff. The outcome will be, I hope, a considered and detailed account of Anglican prison ministry today by those who actually do it. This would take the form of a PhD thesis but could also lead to journal articles and a book.

There has been excellent recent research into the roles of governors and prison officers, but there has so far been nothing about the role of Anglican chaplains, although they are still statutory officers of every prison. I'm inviting you to help me fill that gap by reflecting on your work and ministry in an interview. There might be one follow-up session. You would have the opportunity to check over the transcribed dialogue.

I'd like you also to consider whether you would be willing to take part in two focus group sessions. These would be some months apart and be timed to coincide with area chaplains' meetings.

I assure you that our conversations would be confidential between you and me and that any quotations would be completely anonymous. The identity and location of your establishment and diocese would also be anonymised. ***All guarantees of confidentiality are subject to the need for compliance with the Prison Service Code of Conduct (PSO8460). In addition, you will wish to maintain the confidentiality associated with your role as priest and chaplain.***

Your participation in the project is entirely voluntary and you would be free to withdraw at any time for any reason. Naturally, I should be delighted and grateful if you decide to take part in the project.

I enclose *Information for potential participants* and two consent forms. I should be glad if you could return one completed form in the envelope provided within the next two weeks. Should you want to know more, I append my contact details. If you prefer not to take part, could you return the form anyway, indicating this. If you are willing to take part I shall contact you by phone at your prison to arrange a date for us to meet later in the year.

With best wishes

Peter Phillips

## **b. Fieldwork document 2**

### **INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

#### **THE ROLE OF THE ANGLICAN PRISON CHAPLAIN IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY.**

##### **What is the purpose of this project?**

The early chaplains, statutory officers of their prisons from 1823, left written and transcribed oral evidence about how they saw their role and about how they tried to fulfil it at a time when there was close correspondence between theology and penal philosophy. The purpose of this project is to find out how Anglican prison chaplains, still statutory appointments, think about their ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Another purpose is to extend research into prisons and prison staff.

##### **What is its potential value?**

There is recent detailed research on people who perform other prison roles. There is a small amount of research into specific aspects of chaplaincy but none at all into the whole ministry of chaplains from the Church of England and the Church in Wales. This project aims, therefore, both to help fill that gap and to be a springboard for further research. It should be of interest to:

- All other chaplains, not only Anglicans, as reflection on their ministry
- Anglican church authorities
- The National Offender Management Service and providers of prison services, especially in connection with pastoral and resettlement provision.
- Academic researchers as a step to further research
- Legislators and policy makers

##### **Who is being invited to take part?**

Chaplains in England and Wales who are the designated Anglican chaplain (whether full or part time) in their establishment are being invited to participate in the research project. As far as possible it will be based on two Prison Service areas but it will be necessary to go outside these in order to achieve a manageable, representative sample both of people and establishment types. There will be no other participants.

##### **Who is doing this research?**

I am Peter Phillips, a research student at St Michael's College, Llandaff and Cardiff University. Before that I was a full time Anglican prison chaplain who worked mostly in category A and B male establishments, though with some experience of open conditions. My current prison role is as a volunteer chaplain at a women's local prison. You may have heard my presentation about "*How those old time chaplains can help us look at our ministry*" at the Anglican chaplains conference in

June 2009. I have current CRB and CTC clearance, as well as identification from my current establishment.

### **Who is backing this research?**

My research is entirely independent and self funded. The necessary approval to conduct it has been formally given by the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, HM Prison Service and by the appropriate private contractors. This does not imply any prior access to materials or control over them.

### **What would individual participation involve?**

I would visit you, preferably in your establishment, for the purpose of an interview. The session would be semi-structured so I would use a number of prompts rather than a list of questions to encourage you to reflect on what you do, how and why you do it, and the way you see your role in the prison. I would need to bring a small voice recorder with me which would require permission in each establishment. A follow-up visit might be needed.

### **What would focus group participation involve?**

A small group of participants from each of the two Prison Service areas would meet on two occasions: first, to discuss some of the topics to be raised with participants and, secondly, to discuss emergent themes and views. They would be selected from amongst those who had indicated a willingness to take part in group discussion, on the basis of establishing variety of experience within the group. Issues raised would be general and would be presented in such a way that they could not be identified with an individual chaplain. A focus group would consider matters arising from the "other" area. The same rules and practice of confidentiality would apply between the members of a group and the researcher as between the researcher and individual chaplains.

### **Confidentiality**

All audio recordings and any details which would suggest your identity, that of your prison or your diocese would remain confidential between the researcher (me) and the individual participant. My supervisor (who is in no way connected with the Prison Service or with prison establishments) may listen to a brief extract in order to assess my methods of transcription. Transcripts of interviews would be made available for you to check their accuracy and fidelity to what you meant to say, unless you indicated otherwise. I would transfer each interview to a CD-R which would be kept under secure conditions. The thesis will refer to and quote actual words but the identity of the speaker and their location will not be revealed beyond a description like "chaplain in a local prison" or "a chaplain with several years experience". The same principles of confidentiality will apply to focus group discussions. ***All guarantees of confidentiality are subject to the need for compliance with the Prison Service Code of Conduct (PSO8460 updated 19/10/09, especially §2.9 & §3.7)). In addition you will wish to maintain the confidentiality associated with your role as priest and chaplain.***

### **Obtaining consent**

To interview you I shall need your written consent to take part in the project and I attach two consent forms for you to complete. Alternatively, you can obtain a copy by emailing me at **PhillipsPM@cf.ac.uk**. Please return one copy to me and keep the other.

### **Can I change my mind after giving consent?**

Yes. If you felt at any point that you would prefer to withdraw from the project you would be entirely free to do so; there would be no obligation to give a reason for withdrawing. In this case, all research material, in whatever form, obtained from you would be erased or destroyed unless you indicated that you were willing for it to be used.

**c. Fieldwork document 3**

**THE ROLE OF THE ANGLICAN PRISON CHAPLAIN IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY.**

**Researcher: Peter Phillips**

**CONSENT FORM** (One copy each to be kept by respondent and researcher.)

**1. INTERVIEWS** I am willing to take part in recorded interviews for this research.

- I understand that no-one will have access to the recording apart from the researcher, myself and possibly the researcher's supervisor.
- I understand that everything I say to the researcher in the interview(s) and discussions arising will be confidential between us, subject to the need for compliance with the Prison Service Code of Discipline (PSO 8460). Any comments quoted in the final thesis will be anonymised.
- If anything I mention is taken to a focus group it will be presented in a general and unattributable way. I will be asked if I wish to withhold anything from such a group and will not be asked for a reason.
- The name of my prison establishment, its location and the names of other staff and prisoners will not be revealed. The same confidentiality will apply to mention of dioceses and church personnel.
- I understand that I will have an opportunity to check my interview transcript(s) and amend any part of thereof.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason.
- I understand that the data from this research will be used for a PhD thesis and possibly for a book and articles.

**Signature of respondent** .....

**2. PARTICIPATION IN A FOCUS GROUP**

- I am willing to take part in focus group discussions.
- I understand that the same level of confidentiality and anonymity will apply as for individual interviews.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from a focus group at any time without needing to give a reason

**Signature of respondent:** .....**Date**.....

**Name of respondent** .....**Signature of researcher** .....

**Date** .....

## Appendix 3 Prompts and questions

### a. Interview prompts (generic)

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#### 1

You spent several years in parish ministry, supposedly the mainstream of the Church. I'd be very interested to hear you reflect upon the differences between that experience and this.

Some chaplains describe their prison as their parish. I wonder what you think about that.

What are the attractions of prison chaplaincy for you?

*What sort of theology would you say you bring to prison ministry?*

#### 2

What sorts of things might you be involved with in a typical, reasonably ordinary day or week? (Pre supply list of possibilities? Invite a diary?)

Tell me how you see your role in this prison.

(Is it a different role from any other prison where you have ministered?)

What do you think are the most important aspects of your role?

What do you think is your distinctive contribution to the prison?

What do you think is your distinctive contribution to the Church?

How do you see the role of the Anglican chaplain in relation to the wider justice system?

How would you describe your relations with other prison staff?

(Management, other professionals, prison officers)

What kinds of relationship do you have with prisoners?

---

#### 3

How important is it for you to be an Anglican chaplain?

The role of the established Church in prisons (state) is?

What are your thoughts about co-ordinating a multi-faith team of chaplains?

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#### 4

How far do the Governor and SMT understand and support what you do?

How important is it for you to feel part of the whole prison staff?

How seriously do you feel your views about prisoners and the prison are taken by others working in the establishment?

Tell me about the kind of support you get from the bishop/nominated diocesan cleric.

How does the support you receive as a prison chaplain compare with whatever support you had in a parish?

What are your thoughts about the SPDR method of assessment for chaplains and any formal assessment you engage with in the Church?

---

## 5

From where you are, what do you see as the things the present justice system is getting right?

What weaknesses or injustices do you see in the present justice system, especially as it affects prisons?

---

## 6

What really disappoints or annoys you about working in prisons?

What do you find most difficult about working in prisons?

What do you really enjoy about being a prison chaplain?

How would you compare your experience of parish ministry with your experience of prison ministry?

What, for you, have been the critical/most important specific points in your ministry either in your current establishment or previous establishment(s)?

---

## 7

What do you see as the main causes of crime?

How do you think chaplains, and Anglican chaplains in particular, can contribute to the work of your prison and the wider justice system?

**b. Prompts and questions for Barbara HMP Warren 08/06/2011**

- Collaborative, multi-faith team working?
- Why prison rather than parish?
- Involvement with SORI – restorative justice as chaplaincy function?
- A new start for chaplains as well?
- How do you usually dress for work?
- How do others address you?
- A female chaplain’s experience of working in a male prison.

**c. DENNIS Prompts & questions (HMP Grimley 23/09/2010)**

- Can I ask you to reflect on the role of co-ordinating chaplain? (If necessary, prompt for effect on ministry – differences between co-ordinating and not co-ordinating.)
- How far does not being the co-ordinator affect your position in the staff body and the way you think you are perceived?
- How would you compare ministry to men with ministry to women? (ministry shaped by circumstances)
- How do you see your role as chaplain? (What do you do?) – e.g. mission/counsellor/prisoners’ friend?
- (How far) is it consistent with or reconcilable with the function of the prison AND the way that function is fulfilled?
- Why prison ministry, not parish?
- Contact with diocese/wider church
- How do you dress at work?
- What do you call prisoners/staff?
- How do they address you?
- How do you see the role of the Anglican chaplain as distinct from other Christian ministers in the prison?
- How does multi-faith chaplaincy work for you?
- Where in the prison is most of your ministry carried out?

## **Appendix 4     Sample interview transcripts.**

### **a.        BARBARA        (HMP The Burrows, 08.06.2011)**

... I had an issue with the Roman Catholic who was here at the time and we had a prisoner whose brother was killed in Iraq and this child was in floods of tears; he was only 22 I think.... he walked in and he said to this lad, "And you should be proud, you should be proud that your brother has given his life for the country," and you know and it was just..... It was reported back to me actually, and I did say to him, "You will be going on training to the hospice," and he really, really appreciated it. Yes, he came back and was very good.

**You are making yourself sound very authoritarian.**

No I mean it was just, that particular Roman Catholic who was just..... I was pleased when he moved.

**Yes but otherwise relations there are good?**

Oh absolutely, I am not an authoritarian person.

**No, no I wasn't trying to push you into saying that you were.**

No we have a very collaborative ministry and, to be fair both, Jeanette and the other Anglican and Mohammed have been here longer than I have, erm and so they have experience that I don't have and you know they are generous in sharing their ...

**Did you come here straight from (country named)?**

Oh no, no, no, I have lived here for 36 years now.

**Oh right.**

Erm, I was ordained in 2004.

**That explains why I couldn't find you in my outdated Crockford.**

Oh right.

**So you came into prison ministry from parish ministry by choice?**

Oh totally, totally. I struggled against ordination for years, really, really, erm and then turned 50 and thought well, you know, I must now either have this tested or just stop this thought that keeps coming into my head.

**Why did you struggle with it?**

Because I had great difficulty with the hierarchy of the Anglican church and I didn't really want to ally myself with it and then when I was..... I kept on saying, "Please would someone say no, please would someone say no," all through the selection process and the doors opened and I found myself training and I thought, "Well I

don't know why because I know that I don't want to be an Anglican priest in a parish." I knew that. And then we had to go and do a placement and I have been in, I had lots of dealings with the Prison Phoenix Trust, and sister Elaine McGuinness who was the Roman Catholic nun and so through that contact I thought, "Oh well I will go and do a placement in a prison." So I went into (Name) Prison in ..... I knew nothing, nothing about prisons at all, total, total blank sheet and the doors clanked behind me and it felt like an aeroplane landing, wow I really feel at home.

**What about it grabbed you? If you can say.**

Yes, it is such a privileged place to work.... it is, erm... my problem with parish is - and I think that this is probably due to my (national) background as well - is that they are, the places that I have worked in and lived in have been mono cultural, mono faith wasp places if you like with no sense of actually having to do anything that was outside the comfort zone. And I think that what prison does is that it gives you an opportunity to do that; it is all on your doorstep, multi faith, multi culture erm a real sense of just being there with people. Who are not, a lot of whom are pretending but you know you get people absolutely genuine whose lives have totally fallen apart and you know that that is the place where you can, where you are together there.

**Yes, how do you react to the very English notion of parish? Because I don't think that it is the same in any other country is it, where the parish priest has responsibility for all of the souls in the parish.**

[Indistinct] (4.35) in(country).

**Is it?**

Yes.

**Yes, because I was talking to an Irish chaplain who said he found the whole parish mentality quite alien.**

Right, no, no (country)is just you know it is the Anglican church in(country), it is exactly the same.

**OK, so just to sum all of that up, have you, the problems, the issues as you see them are sort of there, sort of right in front of your nose.**

That is right.

**So if we go on from that into SORI, how does SORI play into that sort of feeling, that initial impetus, reaction to prison?**

Well, SORI, we have been running it, we were part of the set of prisons that were chosen as a pilot and so we have been running it for about 3 years. We have a restorative justice manager who is extraordinarily good. Erm and we only do SORI in [ ] which is our C category prison because we have got people there who are there for a period of time, they are stable, erm and I mean the thing that I love about SORI is that it has taken us such a long time to do, to educate staff, is that no one can tell

you that you have to do it, it has got to come out of your own heart. So no offender manager can say you have got to do SORI because we are really not interested in having some people either. And it is really hard work but it is, I think that it has actually taken people from a place of real denial, so we have the car thief, superb car thief, absolutely brilliant, you know and he said well I don't have any victims because all I do is steal cars. I don't hurt anybody, everybody has got insurance, erm but by the time we had actually got into the Thursday morning of the SORI week he was going you know what I have got hundreds and thousands of victims, I can't believe how many lives I have damaged. And to watch that transformation happen with people when they go, "Oh, I never realised what I was doing, how many people...." because often people, the people when they start off and say, "Well my victims are my family." But once you start getting them to walk in the shoes of the victim, I mean Sorry is like a victim awareness you know, but it is like that actual pushing them into that place where they go. And we had an extraordinary experience because we try really hard because we always bring in different victims because you know our.....is not about the men; it is actually about the victims. And we had this lad who was a football hooligan and he arranged football riots all around Europe, he was the ring, master ring leader...

### **He is not a Welsh man by any chance is he?**

He could have been, and anyway he was..... there was a..... and we worked really hard to make sure the victims are not in the audience; really, you know, that would be so wrong. So anyway this chap stood up and he said, he was talking about this riot and he was talking about how people had been so scared and they had rummaged the local church and how dreadful he had felt and dads with their kids and he never gave it half a second's thought, you know how sorry he was and what damage he had caused. And at question time this woman put her hand up and she said, "I want you to know I was giving my 17 year old son a driving lesson down that road, on the day of the riot and," she said, "he hasn't been able to drive down that street ever again. But," she said, "what I want to say to you is that you deserve a second chance and I am here to tell you that." Wow. And during the tea afterwards the two were just standing with tears running down their faces and I would guarantee that lad will never ever do that again. It was such a powerful moment.

### **Yes, can I be a bit subversive here?**

Yes.

Because, a number of people have talked to me about their RJ involvement, whether it is Sycamore Tree or whether it is SORI. They will talk about the impact of the victim testimony, if you like to call it that, and they talk about it in terms of tears. The cynic in me says that is not a means of measuring an outcome.

No it isn't and to be fair it is reducing reoffending, it is them not coming back, erm and you know it is not a silver bullet and there are people for whom that experience is profound but it doesn't last. It evaporates and you might see, because one of the advantages that we have here of being a B, C, and D is that we get the progression,

so men that we have worked with in the B cat we then catch up with in the C and then move into the D, right so we can actually follow them. Erm and so the ....

**Formally or just informally?**

No informally. Yes, so we have got people who have done SORI in[ ], in the C cat who will then move to the D cat and you can watch their performance just deteriorating, you know they will kind of float back to; you just know that they are up to something. Erm...whereas others, you know, you can see that they are actually changed people; you can tell the way that they walk, the way they talk and the way that they engage and how they will often go back, they will come and look for us who have been tutors on the course, facilitators on the course. You know and come back and say, but it is not for everybody.

**No and yet earlier on you said it is about the victims, it is not about the men.**

Yes and it is about the victims, because the victims that have come in will then, I mean victim support work mostly with the victims and so they will come in and they will very often at that point see it as..... I will backtrack a little bit but one of the extraordinary things about the Thursday afternoon when we bring in people from the outside..... is that you have got 2 groups of terrified people, because the people coming in have probably never been into a jail before and they are absolutely terrified of these men who they perceive as just being horrible, vile, violent. And the men are absolutely terrified of what the people who are coming in are going to be saying to them and so we pair them off. We make them talk to each other at the beginning and the victims will say, you know, "All I want to know is that they are doing something to address their offending behaviour, I want to know that." And then actually that fear that we have got, that we actually can't go out and leave our houses alone anymore, you know it was a random, it was chance, you know, they hadn't been stalking my house for months to find out, you know.

**People talk about the ripples, the ripple effect of crimes; I wonder whether it might be possible to turn that around and talk about the ripple effect of SORI or Sycamore Tree indeed, who it affects and how.**

Yes, well we.... one of the benefits is bringing in members of the public into the prison. I am a great believer that actually bringing people in and showing them what happens is hugely important, and so we actually specifically target, we bring in magistrates, we bring in policemen, we bring in fire officers, we bring in probation from the outside, we have brought in the Lord lieutenant of the county, you know we actually specifically target people who we think will actually go out and be ambassadors and to say to other people, "We have been to this course, we were there on the Thursday afternoon and it was extraordinary," because we want people to actually become aware of SORI in the community and then buy in to help us help the men when they get out, you know, because you will know yourself, you know, that once they have walked through the doors, you know, there is no one there to say actually, "Come," and the number of churches that I phone up and say, "Look, I have got an offender coming into your area, you know longing come to church." Very often people go, "You know actually my congregation....." And I want to weep, you

know, because you say, "Actually the crime is not an isolated incident; this is all of our responsibilities."

**Of course this place pulls from a pretty wide area doesn't it? I am just asking in terms of what the possibilities of community chaplaincy have been or are.**

We did have a community chaplain who was here for a little while and then left. We have got various people around us who are, who have got little bits of projects starting but there is nothing co-ordinated. And it is really hard to, we did have a really bad experience with a group in (place name); that was just appalling, so we are a little bit anxious and we really want to make sure that everywhere that is doing this work have got very, very firm boundaries and know what they are taking on, you know, because people can be very pie in the sky about this altruistic thing that they are giving to the prisoners.

**"We will just love them!"**

Yes, that is right, you go, "No, no these are prisoners, these are people who have committed crime that you are dealing with and just because they have said that they are sorry and they will never re-offend," you know. Honestly it is the level of naivety that often worries me.

**Yes, you are strong believer in original sin obviously. Just a few moments ago you were talking about inviting erm sort of key figures in the wider community in, and you said we invite them, who is the we?**

Well [ ] who is the RJ manager who actually we invited over to come and see you today...

**Whom I might be recommended to meet?**

Yes, well I think that you would really, I think that you would really like to meet him; he would like to meet you, he is erm, he kind of heads it up and then we work together.

**Right and he is manager, prison officer?**

Yes, he is a manager, he has worked in prisons for... as a worship leader and all sorts, running Alpha and things like that for years and years and he knows very, very...

**Right, so what, he is a full time employee?**

No he is a part time employee.

**Oh, I see and his normal role in prison is to be restorative justice officer?**

Yes that is what he does; prior to that he was just a volunteer, not just a volunteer but you know a vitally important volunteer but now he one of our local, I forget what people are called now but this chap (name) has just given us £60,000 for the next year to do restorative justice work in prisons because one of our dreams is to be

actually be able not just to do SORI because SORI is just an aspect. But Jeanette has done some mediation training and so we do mediation; we have got a superb lady who is sort of the Mrs Restorative Justice in the probation prison who has worked very closely with us. But we would love to embed RJ into things like adjudications, erm into things like you know altercations between prisoners and prisoners or prisoners and staff, erm you know; we would really like to make that part of, the kind of, you know, the flagship RJ prison.

**Yes, you got there before I did. OK; I mean we have talked or we have implied maybe what the benefits or SORI are for the victims, for the prisoners as well. What about you?**

Well it is one...

**What does it do for you?**

It is one of the things that I really hang on to. I didn't want to be really co-ordinating chaplain but I got the job and part of my thinking at the time was that I would, I came into the prison to work with prisoners. What happens when you become co-ordinating chaplain is you have to spend a lot more time doing admin stuff, so I have quite consciously decided that I would go to most meetings myself. Right, so I go to most, you know security, safer custody, foreign nationals, diversity, in order to free my chaplains up to do what I know they want to do which is actually meet with the prisoners. So I will do, I take on board a lot of that which means that my time with prisoners is really reduced, I try and keep 2 half days a week where I only do prisoner stuff and I also jealously guard my commitment to SORI because that is doing what I came into the prison to do, which is to work with offenders.

**To work with them in.....??**

Well I just found that out of SORI I get such delight in watching people move from A to B, you know and even if the shift is minimal you could just see eyes opening, just a little bit and that is such a gift, you know it is a, it is a huge privilege to be able to do that.

**Is it possible, and you may not want to do this, is it possible to put that into religious vocabulary or into faith vocabulary? I said that you might not want to.**

I probably don't want to actually, erm because as I was saying earlier after the Thursday afternoon you just sit there and you think well, take off your shoes, this is holy ground because there has been a sense of almost confession and forgiveness. I am now using, and, but it feels like that. You know people, I mean imagine, imagine that deep dark place that you have that actually you want nobody to shine a light into, and we have all got them you know, and you think of actually, you think about it and you go oh and then you think of standing up in front of 40 people, strangers and saying you know this is what I have done. And at that, it is such a cathartic experience yes that it becomes, it is like forgiveness.

**What comes after forgiveness?**

Well then it is the hard road.

**Yes.**

Then it is the hard road you know, it is not a as I say it is not a magic bullet that then...

**I heard, when we were in the office earlier on, I heard you use the word redemption.**

Well yes it is, it is you know it is redemption; at that moment everything is forgiven, redeeming has happened, the transformation is there, it is all there, encapsulated in that moment.

**Yes, I mean 3 times now you have said to me, "I didn't want to be ordained as Anglican priest, didn't want to be co-ordinating chaplain," didn't want to translate what you were saying into a kind of religious register and I am being unfair in picking that up?**

No, no, not at all, I think that....

**But on the face of it you are doing things that you don't want to do.**

Well because, but I think that what has happened is that, "I don't want to," has then become "OK", you know, and in some sense, in a religious sense it is, "I don't want to, but actually, God, you might want me to be doing this," and at the point where I have gone, stopped going, "I don't want to," and I have just opened my hands and it then becomes OK. you know. I know being ordained was the right thing to do, I know and absolutely not a shadow of a doubt about that. "I don't want to be co-ordinating chaplain" has also, because of my team, become a place of delight. I wake up every morning and think I can't wait to get to work. I love it and part of it is working with this team, that is, it is funny and acerbic and its punchy and it is challenging and you know those days when we are sitting with the Bible and the Koran and saying you know, "The Bible says this about; what does the Koran say?" If I could bottle what we have got here and translate it out into the world it would be transformational.

**And into the Church of England?**

Absolutely, totally, totally, nowhere else do you get this level of understanding, of respect, of you know, Isfail has spent the whole morning with Jeanette trying to work out how to get Roman Catholics into church on Saturday; well what a better example of sheer non-grabbiness, of expansiveness, of generosity, of spirit and time and everything else.

**Do you ever eat together as a team?**

We do; we have regular, we have regular lunches where we, we actually invite the whole, all the senior management team, you know the senior officers, all the security, all the governors and then we all bring in what we like to cook best. So the Sikh minister will bring in samosas and you know the Caribbean guy will bring in his goat curry, so we have a huge mixture of food, and everybody looks forward to it,

you know, and we find that it actually breaks down barriers; it brings people into the chapel, all those conversations that you can have, you know, over food. Erm there are, some people don't like going out in the evenings but within the chaplaincy there will be evenings out to restaurants, you know.

**Right yes, and as far as prison staff and prisoners are concerned how do they call you, what do they call you?**

Miss.

**Miss, right, not Barbara.**

Those who know me call me Barbara.

**Right and you are happy with that?**

Absolutely.

**You prefer that?**

I do.

**OK, now I am not being personal, honestly I am not, would you normally dress like this for work?**

Yes.

**Can I ask why?**

In what way? You mean trousers?

**Why trouser suits? Why clerical shirts, which can sometimes be a statement of situation can't it?**

Sure, erm, I have always worn a clerical shirt when I am at work.

**Yes OK.**

If I am going off and doing training at Newbold Revell or I am going to do something then I wouldn't wear a collar but I would always, I think, probably cover up from my neck to my ankles.

**Yes.**

Just because I feel happier like that and I think that it is easier for the men.

**That is what I was wondering really.**

Yes, that is right, it is conscious.

**They actually come across a variety of practice.**

Absolutely, well I would..... within the chaplaincy, I wouldn't have anybody with inappropriate dress.

**No?**

Because it is not fair. You do see it, I mean particularly you see it amongst the sort of CARATS workers or the programmes workers and you think, "Why are you dressing like that?" Unfortunately I am old enough now because I can say that.

**Right since I have started talking, I am moving on from dress but one of the things, the other thing that is interesting me a lot apart from restorative justice and I don't think that anybody else has written about this, is the experience of women chaplains working in male prisons. Working in male prisons and working in the male culture, which is not necessarily the same thing and I am just wondering whether that sparks any immediate reaction in you?**

I am always surprised at the level of respect from the prisoners; well I can't talk for anybody else but certainly for me the sense in which you know they swear they are like, "Oh I am terribly sorry, you know I didn't mean to do that." There will be an immediate.... and actually with the staff as well; the staff will do that as well, they go, "Oh I am so sorry," and I go, "Well use a swear word that I haven't heard before and I will probably give you a fiver." But there is a real, real kind of, you know... we must be a little politer. There is something... especially if.... well for a lot of men they will find it easier to talk to a female, and you have had the experience as I have had where people say, "Actually no one has ever listened to me before, you know I have never told this story to anybody," and that is such a place of privilege.

**I mean there could be two layers to that couldn't there, one because you are chaplain and two because you are a woman?**

Absolutely, sure.

**Have you ever had the experience of a man crying on your shoulder?**

Not literally on my shoulder no.

**I know women that have.**

I come from a counselling world where by my boundaries have always been very clear.

**So you don't do hugs?**

No, no, no I don't, erm I have on occasions been hugged erm ....

**That is good.**

You know and that is fine, erm but I wouldn't initiate that only because of my counselling training. I will sometimes, I mean I will, you know, if you have got a kid whose father has died and you know he is, you know, I will often, well you know put my hand on his shoulder really, I wouldn't go and do a hug.

**Well no; I mean there is a ministry graded touch isn't there?**

Yes there is.

**I think that I know the answer to this because I think that you have said it already, erm but I might ask you to say it again, what is your biggest satisfaction from being an Anglican chaplain, the thing that you didn't want to be, an Anglican co-ordinating chaplain in a male prison?**

Well I love, I think that I have said, it as I love the multi faith, multi-cultural team working, the privilege of actually being alongside prisoners who have maybe never had anybody to listen to them before. Helping to mediate and work through this complicated system you know of prison rules and regulations and actually seeing my team develop and fly, I love that. I love that. Chris is a new volunteer and it is just been a delight you know to bring her in and watch her kind of grow in confidence and develop and you know, and enjoy. She comes in 2 days a week, you know, erm which is pretty stunning and you know to watch the delight that she gets out of it erm...

**Yes I wouldn't have minded her as a volunteer.**

No, no she is such good, really good news. You know I have got fabulous, fabulous volunteers..

**Pleasant, bright and nobody's fool.**

Absolutely, you know, but I have, I have got, I would, we would sink without trace because remember, I have got 3 sites and this is only 1 of them. So while we are here I need other people on 2 other sites actually keeping the show on the road.

**How do you manage that?**

It is really difficult, erm it is really difficult, if I didn't have volunteers in my D cat I seriously wouldn't manage, erm because we don't have sufficient staff to cover all the time, I always start off my day in the D cat, always there between 8 and quarter to 9 and people know that. So if there are any traumas or dramas or whatever then I will pick those up every morning, and people know where they can find me if they need me because I am really the person who knows house block 8 best.

**That is the D cat?**

That is the D cat yes, my Sikh minister goes in one day. He does a service there but he doesn't really know them, he doesn't know the staff and he doesn't know the set up and, you know, I am the one that actually knows, I trawl everywhere and so I know all 3 sites really, really well. But it is really difficult, and when I have got staff then I can go, "OK that is fine," you know but today is Wednesday and I have got no one over in [ ]. I was tied up most of the morning and I have probably got a meeting this afternoon and so it will be 5.00 before I can get over there. But I have, I think that I have communicated sufficiently to the staff so that they know if there is a death or if there is anything that needs urgent picking up then I will go straight over.

**What about the main services on a Sunday?**

Jeanette controls here, and we have got 2 groups that come in on a Sunday.

**This is the Cat B isn't it?**

Yes the Cat B's, so we have got 2 groups that come in on 2 Sundays here, erm and Jeanette does the other 3, 2 or 3.

**Right, and what sort of service is that?**

Well, once a month she has a Eucharist here and the others are just ordinary services. I always do a half past 8 in my D cat which is always a communion service because I have got the best chapel in the entire prison estate there.

**Really?**

Yes it is an absolutely fabulous because the house used to belong to [name and local detail] and so it has got a fabulous, fabulous chapel with, you know, medieval stained glassed windows. It is just..... the atmosphere is stunning. It is, it is just so beautiful, it is so lovely and so I do a half past 8 there and then I do a half past 10 in my B cat, C cat sorry and there again I have got 2 groups that come in, yes 2 Sundays in the month.

**Yes, when we turn this off I will tell you about another chaplain who has a similar problem. Right, I think that is about it really, we have covered an awful lot of ground in the very short space of time, thank you very much.**

OK, my pleasure.

**What I do ask people to do and I sometimes forget is I like to keep a kind of a basic data sheet going.**

OK.

**How long have you worked in prisons?**

Erm full time 5 years.

**5 years and some part time before that?**

Yes.

**OK.**

And the Bishop was lovely and he gave me a day off a week from that, from my last 2 years of my.....

**Right, and before that you said that you were in counselling?**

Yes, I was a counsellor and I was, I taught English as a foreign language.

**Oh right, my first master's degree was in teaching English as a foreign language.**

Oh yes, OK. Yes, I lived in an area where there were lots of au pairs and so it was great teaching sort of little groups of 10 round my dining room table.

**Yes, I was deputy head of a school with..... how many nationalities did we have, 23 I think.**

Oh my goodness me, OK.

**Yes, so this (prison) is B, C and D isn't it?**

It is.

**How many prisoners all together?**

Oh about 140,000. Don't be stupid! 1400, it sometimes feels like that though!!

**And it is all HMPS these days isn't it?**

It is, currently we are .....at the end of the month.

**Yes, indeed. So you are co-ordinating chaplain and also in the establishment you go to the morning meetings, I know that you do that, are you on the SMT?**

Yes, I am head of the staff care team; I also am in charge of the children and families, whichever pathway that is. So I line manage the Visitor Centre; we have got a huge erm family support workers play team that I co-ordinate.

**Yes I went into the Visitors Centre on the way in; they are very hospitable.**

Yes I know; they are a great crowd down there, they really are excellent, but that is all my world.

**You are not on drug strategy or.....?**

Yes I go to all those.

**The lot?**

Yes drug strategy, financials, yes diversity, you name it and I am there.

**Right, because that is actually how you sort of interpret your role isn't it?**

Yes it is.

**That is fine, that is lovely. Right the last 2 bits are for you to do. We talked about where you were ecclesiologically and where you were theologically and I am going to ask you to rate yourself on the scale. I think that it is easier if you just sort of read it rather than..... I deliberately didn't call the centre point zero. Thank you very much.**

Right.

**That is fine, that is lovely; thank you for your time.**

**b. Dennis (HMP Grimley, 23/09/2010)**

**There we go, if that little red light goes out then we have stopped recording.**

Right OK.

**One of the things that I am finding is that 2 things are getting confused with each other, one is the role of the co-ordinating chaplain and the other is the role of the Anglican chaplain as a faith minister. Now you have worked in a number of different institutions as co-ordinator and not co-ordinator; I just wondered if you had got any ideas about that. Well I know that you have.**

OK, when you are in part of a team you want to, there is some responsibility there, Tim is doing his job as a co-ordinator and it is really, really difficult, I mean it is twice the work in a sense. So when you have got the experience that you have you just want to share that, it is not a formal training situation or anything, it is just part of a college I suppose. So in that sense the expertise, the experience that you have isn't wasted when you move from one to the other because you can pass it on, you can use it as well because... I think that these days to have one person..... yes, there is also the added complication that people want the co-ordinator to be manager, but it is a quite different job to that. So to have the co-ordinator as the responsible globally, you know, carry the can person, and do all the work person, .....so how do the roles differ? The one major difference is the responsibility, the function is the same, but the governor needs somebody to send the requests through to and get the response from, you know. Does that make sense?

**Yes.**

So if you are the Anglican chaplain with no experience I guess that is something different, but if the Anglican chaplain with some experience, I don't think that we can escape from this sort of erm, what, the bishop gives, the cure of souls sort of thing. We are tied into that state of the state and the state of being yes?

**I think that is a big issue actually.**

The parish is the same, we say that anybody can walk through our vicarage door or our church; we are there, we don't count how many Anglicans are in our parish, we say there are 12,000 or 18,000 people. It is the same in the prison, I have never escaped from being not just a prison chaplain or the prison chaplain, it's a bit arbitrary, but Dennis who has the care of prisoners, visitors and staff. And it is not a denominational issue, whoever they are, if there is a Buddhist behind the cell door or in the office then OK. So I have..... that is it, yes.

**OK, right, so you are talking really, are you, let me get this right, that co-ordination is sort of shared according to experience.**

I think the best of teams are, there are some people who like the status that goes with that, there are some people who like the authority that goes with that....

**Does it eat into the time that you might be sort of working with prisoners, working with staff?**

Co-ordinating?

**Yes.**

Oh massively, yes, and not just time wise but energy wise, direction wise. And it depends where you are in the prison, I have been a co-ordinator when I have been part of the senior management team and that means you are doing a lot of direction to the prisoners, giving your shape at that level. It means that you are going off on planning weekends and other like and you get caught up in all of that, the business of the prison and how that relates to what is now ( ) wasn't there, it was regional policies and we were addressing national policies. Erm, on that level it takes an inordinate amount of time but then over the years it changes so that today when you have got Shared Services, so you haven't got a personnel department as such, erm who looks after disciplinary? Who looks after sickness? The co-ordinator. Staff welfare, the co-ordinator, you know chaplaincy staff wise.

**Yes, so you are back to what you were saying earlier on about manager.**

So you are then the manager because somebody has to be the name on the programme.

**Yes, talking about the sort of time that is involved with erm the management of, if you will the department, erm and if you are a member of SMT then you are involved in not only SMT but in a number of sort of cross prison things. You are involved in, you mentioned weekends away. Is there, perhaps a danger that one becomes more of a prison service person than a church person?**

Oh it is a constant battle that isn't it? You are very conscious sometimes that you have got 2 masters, the governor and the bishop at that level. I mean there are all sorts of intermediaries like the regional chaplain and the dean or whoever, but you know it is a sort of a church master isn't it and a prison master.

**I think Jesus had something to say, is it Luke 16, about serving two masters?**

Yes that was last week's reading.

**It was indeed, yes.**

Yes, so you are always constantly fighting that, I can honestly personally say that my vocation is to be me. That is not a function is it, talking like that, it is to be, so all I can be is Dennis the priest in whatever role I find myself in and to do that function. You don't have to just do holy things in church to be a priest, there are all sorts of places to do that and the boardroom is one of them. Especially when it becomes complicated when you are talking about variety and justice, fairness and equality and all the rest of the stuff that we now have in the diversity. But back in the 1990's there was all of that fight to do as well, so and it has not been often but sometimes

you have to stand there in the boardroom and say, "Governor that is not moral," or, "that is not right," or "that is not fair, we cannot go down that road." So you know erm..

**And the response is, or the effect is?**

Well the immediate effect might be you know, hrumph, hrumph, but later on because back then as well the governor was probably your line manager, or certainly the deputy. It was sit and have a chat and say, "Well how do we achieve whatever it is..... what is the effect on people?" Because that is the bottom line, because if our business is about anything it is about people and the governor should be about people not about business plans.

**So there is ministry in the boardroom, clearly. Where is ministry conducted in a prison for you? Just in the chapel? Clearly not.**

Everywhere I am, everywhere I am.

**So the phrase "sacred space" could mean either everything or nothing?**

It is very important that; I protect this space because when people come into this space, whether they have a recognition of a spirituality of any kind or not, they recognise it is not on the landing. There is no clanging, no voices, no loud [noises] and it is a little bit of outside prison, OK? So I am protective of that sacred space. But I have a very dear friend who is a zen Buddhist, and erm we have had great conversations and he was moving, he's a master, he has got his own temple and he had to move and I said, "Well where is the temple?" You know, it was that sort of conversation and he said, "I am the temple, I take it where ever I go." We don't often talk about that in Christian terms about being the temple and, "I take it where ever I go, but we do."

**So yes...**

But if I am on the landing, you know, if I mess up it means the whole of the chaplaincy have messed up, all my colleagues because it ..... but wherever I am, if I am in somebody's office and if I am photocopying, if I am down in segregation, if we are in somebody's cell and they are crying, if I am in visits meeting their partner, wherever I am, I am recognised.

**And what do you do?**

What do I do? I have no idea, I have no idea. I am a presence, maybe Christ is a presence because I am there, quite often it is a mistake for me to be who I want to be to those people, they always have their own needs as well, their own expectations and I don't set out to meet them but they will see whatever..... Sometimes I am just, could be days on end, I have just been a social worker. So be it. It is still a presence and it is still Christ's presence and erm we can get all wrapped up in theology now.

**We could.**

Ha, but really when my feet are aching and I have got my keys in my hand, I've just pulled my shoulder because the gate was stiff and I am going off to see yet another person, it may be somebody who just wants to have a whinge and a moan and I just, oh, want to go and have a cup of tea or there might be some big, big crisis and this person's whole world and their family's just about to fall apart. And sometimes I walk out of there and it is all put back together and I don't know what I did, I don't know what I did. Sometimes it might be a phone call but sometimes I really don't know what I did. So it is OK, the world goes on for that person.

**So you do what you think needs to be done at the time, would that include saying a prayer with the man, reading a bit of scripture with him, how do you do it?**

I don't know, again I don't know - discernment's a great thing isn't it?

**Yes it is.**

Sometimes I walk out of a cell and I think no, he didn't really want to pray and so I didn't ask him and sometimes I really don't look at denomination, I really don't look at faith in that sense, spirituality. OK, that means something slightly different but it maybe somebody who is clearly not Christian because he's called Ali or maybe he is; I wouldn't know and I wouldn't ask. But on occasion I have said, "Let's just pray and say thanks." And sometimes the lad that I know is a Christian and quite devout and I want to pray; sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Sometimes in the middle of the landing a man will say, "Oh will you pray for me?" and they are quite taken aback because I have stopped there and then and prayed with them, but they meant, "Will you go to the chapel and say a prayer for me." But that is something that I learnt in the women's prison, it is quite different; men always, I have had years in working with men, they would stop you and say, "Would you pray for me?" and they... you would write it in your book and go to the chapel and that is what they expect you to do, include them in your office or Sunday prayers; that is what they expected. When I went to (prison name), well actually the women came to (prison name) first, they would say, "Oh chaplain, pray for me," and I would say, "Oh yes. What is your name?" and they would tell me and I would write it in my book and then they would look a bit surprised as I would turn to go away. They meant pray now. So I learnt that, yeah?

**Yes.**

There is no.... women are quite different in that sense, their emotions are up front, their needs are up front, doesn't matter who was on the landings, whether it was on the yard, wherever it was, they would be quite open about it, "Dennis, I need the chaplain to pray for me." So I do it here on occasions as well, because sometimes, I said it may be expectation, but sometimes actually it is good to confound their expectations.

**Yes, I was going to ask you about working with women and working with men, just to see whether you had any thoughts, whether it is a different kind of**

**ministry in a women's prison or whether there are important aspects of it which are different. You have just mentioned one.**

I am still thinking about that, the sort of flippant story that somebody told me when I went to train, retrain for working with women, a chaplain to women said, "Oh yes, this is very un PC but very accurate and you will discover this, madder, badder and sadder." I thought that was awful but if you wanted it encapsulated there it is. People have asked me to compare them and I have said, "Well it is like the difference between driving a car and driving a speedboat; they have both got steering wheels but they are not the same. So there's so many things that are the same but so many that are different.

**Just to be clear, which is which, which is the car and which is the speedboat?**

It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. I suppose the car is the male prisoners and the speedboats slide around a lot. Working with women is a..... it is harder to get a fix on and so maybe the speedboat analogy is quite good to use, they slide about. They are much more open with their needs; they are much more straightforward in their demands. They join because they are corporate; women are the community, they really are. You get that feeling that they are the glue that keeps the world together, when you compare them in those sort of environments. If it wasn't for women men wouldn't join anything, you know. That is not true obviously but it is a sort of a truism, if you go into a male prison and ask a man how many people are in front of him and behind him in the pecking order he will know, OK? He will know exactly where he is in the pack. Women have not got an inkling, a clue what you are talking about if you say that; they just are and they get into family groups as well, mum, dad and children. Sometimes the emotional spills over into sexual erm, but nevertheless, whatever it is, there is that need to bond and be family units. There is an emotional dependence, so it is all on that sort of level. Erm somebody said that women's needs are greater. That is not true; well it is sort of true because of the primary care values. But men's needs are just as great; it is just that they don't tell you and they hide them away. It is beginning to change now; when I arrived here in December I was a bit staggered to see how many ACCT documents were open, you know; we were running around 20 here. In this sized population I would have expected 5 or 6 when I left the male estate but now men are actually admitting that they self harm, that they are vulnerable and that is a new thing. So men, I think, are beginning to respond, and the Prison Service is beginning to not be male characteristic dominated; there is a femininity you know, touchy-feely you might call it. But it is beginning, but the needs of men are the same.

**There is a view, isn't there, that women get a rougher deal from the prison system, the judicial system than the men do and I just wonder whether you have got any thoughts about that.**

Yes, there is no empirical evidence on this is there, well very little.

**Some, I don't know, just .....**

But I think where I have had some comparators on sentences, I mean it is very difficult these days isn't it, but whereas a man I would have expected to get 6 years for something women will generally seem to be getting around 8. It is only a slight shift but where you get to the lower end of sentencing where there would be a.... you would expect there to be a lot more community service stuff [but] no, they were getting custodials. Now that may be because they have already been through all of the, I don't know, I didn't look at their histories, but they did seem to get the rough end of justice. Sometimes when they reported back, I never bothered to verify stuff, it was their story; the judge said this to me, the judge said that to me, I thought that was a bit rough sometimes, you know; it is almost a sort of a sexist thing. And I suppose the evidence that everybody understands of a generation is the Hindley, Brady thing. Why was Hindley the one that was vilified? Because she was a woman; we don't expect it from mothers, a feminine quality isn't to kill. So maybe that is why they get the rough end of the stick as well.

**Just to move on a little from that then; as a male working in a female prison, were you ever aware of that sort of gender difference?**

Yes, yes, it brought back some initial training that I had about racism and it showed a picture of the doctors going through a corridor and the patients all standing up against the wall and there was this sort of implied authority with their white coats flapping, shows you how far back we are going. But there is an element that if you are staff with your keys you walk down the landing and people move out of the way, and we are not, if we are not careful, we are not conscious of that. Sometimes you have to remind yourself that you are a white male, middle class if you want, but certainly well educated male, very self aware and assured in a very, very erm,..... in a very, very vulnerable group of people, much more vulnerable than male. So you have to be aware of your effect sometimes; thankfully humour was a great leveller, you know. But if you go into one of the vulnerable larger landings sometimes you pull yourself up because you saw prisoners moving out of your way and sort of, "Oh I am strutting a bit here," you know, so yes.

**Did you enjoy it?**

Oh I loved it. I said I would never ever work with women, OK, anyone but women you know. They re-rolled (prison name) and I was terrified. It was brilliant. So much so that I found it difficult to work with the men when we re-rolled back, which is one of the reasons why I went to (prison name), to work with women again. The men that were turning up in a cat C I realised most of the problems that the female prisoners had were caused by these men and I couldn't differentiate; it was very difficult to minister in that situation.

**Yes that is interesting.**

But it was exciting and noisy.

**Yes I will just say for the sake of the tape that I actually work in a women's prison.**

You recognise that?

**Yes and so I know where you are coming from. Can I ask a completely different question and just again for the sake of the tape sort of sitting here looking at you, black shirt and no collar, how do you normally dress at work?**

Black shirt and collar but sometimes I just do away with the collar and sometimes I do away with the black shirt. And usually I am in black trousers but grey today.

**Right, any particular system or.....?**

Yes there is no pattern to it, I have worn a black shirt and collar and black trousers here for a year, getting on; they know who I am but it is nice to confound them now and again. Erm they know me, mostly, very few staff don't, know me by my first name, erm and if I come in a green shirt or a blue shirt or whatever erm it changes their perspective of who they think I am. I don't want to belong in a box; erm I found that when I was coming in all the time in clerical. I wasn't a person. I have to be approachable, I have to be human. There are some things that perhaps erm..... differentiate me but I still want to be seen as part of the human race, as an approachable person.

**How do you.....what do you call the staff, how do you address them?**

Mostly by their first name but this is a fairly formal local prison, unlike some they have been on all first name terms, this is not. So Richard, who we bumped into at the gate there, quite often works in segregation; in the segregation I may call him "Oh thank you very much, sir" or erm call him by his surname. Certainly on a crowded landing I call staff by their surname or miss or sir. Erm there are one or two staff that are well known and known by their first names and there I would just say, "Oh hi Tom, all right?"

**Sure, one of the things that fascinates me about myself as well as about other chaplains actually is how we interact with prison officer culture, which after all really runs the prison, the banter, the black humour, I just wonder how you feel about it, how you interact with it.**

I quite enjoy it actually; staff continually amaze me. I have one that may have just chosen some really choice words in describing something or someone, and then somebody else would use something quite mild and say, "Oh sorry chaplain." There is a sort of an oddness about that. But that is something to do with respect.

**They say, "Sorry chaplain," rather than, "sorry Dennis"?**

Yes those are the, yes sometimes, sometimes it will be, "Sorry Dennis," but mostly it is, "Sorry chaplain," because there is that sort of badge, to some of them I am very much Dennis but on occasion like I would call them "sir" they would call me "chaplain". Usually the apology is when we are in a formal meeting of some sort, if we were just chatting over a cuppa or something, even then I get apologies for certain types of language I suppose. I don't know, I can't measure that but the black humour, the gallows humour is absolutely necessary for everybody sometimes and,

to be honest, erm there are only 2 kinds of people who work here, erm there is... it is odd because it is nothing about who you are or what you wear..... but are you either part of the discipline organisation or you are a civvy. Civilians are a little bit risky, some chaplains are civilians, some chaplains are staff; tell me the difference. I don't know, it is something about trust that you build up, something about attitude, it is something, I can't...

**So do I deduce from that, that you would sort of say, "Well out of those 2, I am probably staff."**

I am staff and I want to be staff. Erm because erm I can achieve more, erm it is not very polite but it is on your tape but you know you are either outside the pot pissing in or inside the pot pissing out.(sic)

**Yes, yes, that is mild compared to some of the things...**

Yes, so I would rather be part of it, working for it but also working for the King if you like.

**Yes, as we were going around we were on one wing and you made a few comments about this prison which were complimentary comments about the place in comparison to others that you have worked in.**

Oh caring, yes, yes, absolutely, I have worked over a period of time and so you can't judge them all by 2010. I have worked in most of the northwest prisons in one capacity or another for various lengths of times, either detached or employed. In Grimley I find the staff really quite professional and caring and very human, erm and they are constantly in touch with the chaplaincy, whoever is on duty asking for us by first name,"Can you see such a body, I am a bit worried, can you do this, can you do that, can you help such a such." And staff doing it themselves, not just on the first life centre or the Drug Detox Unit or the Reintegration Centre which are all fairly vulnerable in their own ways, but on the general locations as well. And it struck me when I came, and that is working in male or female and that is not to disparage anybody but it is just the way that Grimley is. I spoke to the governor about it and I said, "Hey, I am not just saying this but because I have found it." He was asking how I had settled. I said that, "I find Preston really quite a caring prison, and for a local as well where it's busy, busy," and he said, "Yes it is odd,"and he found it quite a caring environment. He said that it must be something to do with the family; Grimley is a local prison and some staff have been here a long, long time; they have that sort of stability here of staff. Every staff awards thing, we are giving out service awards of 20, 25 years, so I don't know, I can't put my finger on it but maybe they have carried something through to the newer staff. You are always going to get those that don't care but no, this is outstanding.

**So how does that - and you obviously approve of this and you have, I get the feeling that you feel that you are involved with it and want to be involved in it - what sort of part does that play in the criminal justice system and the progress of an offender sort of offending, going back into the community? I suppose**

**really I am asking what sort of part do you think we play in that or whether we do one?**

We as chaplains?

**Yes.**

Yes, very difficult to isolate us you know from the work that goes on in these people's lives and some of us try to and some of us see the miracles. A couple of times here, but generally we have an effect that quite often we don't know and don't realise, erm what do they call it priority of modelling or something...

**Pro social modelling?**

Pro social modelling in a pro active way, yes. There is that and I suppose if we are approachable and human we are obtainable, so we are giving the guys something obtainable as a sort of, in brackets a normal or a normalising life opportunity, but all staff do that.

**For us religion is the key to it?**

Mmm?

**For us religion is the key to it?**

.... can be.... yes, some do it without religion, I say a spirituality is part of it, recognition of humanity, but sometimes the miracle is that there is a man here who has just got an indeterminate 8 year sentence for a horrible crime really. And erm his life turned around, nothing to do with his trial or sentencing or trying to earn brownie points; he went guilty and held his hands up and admitted. He wasn't trying to get good reports or anything but in fact his reports changed remarkably about 3 months ago when some sort of penny drops, the light went on, a spiritual awareness, it was quite profound. Damascus road, so that is, how often do you see that, once, twice, three times a year, maybe? You know that's.... but otherwise it is those little tiny bits and little tiny bits, we probably know and it is probably statistical. OK, men are adolescent until 30, 35..... but it certainly seems to be the case most men in prison around that age some sort of penny will drop, some sort of enlightenment. We won't see, well we will only see them once more. They go out determined and it is a bit tougher than they thought; the second time the vast majority will make it and we will never see them again. Why bother with all our courses, why bother with our alpha groups and our "This is what you need to do" and all our life style choices that we give them, and part of that is the spirituality of the chaplaincy and their classes as well as the offending behaviour classes, anger management classes. Why do we bother if they are going to suddenly change at 30, 35? I think that it is because actually we give them the tools and whether they reach some sort of maturity of choice they take the tools out of the box and start using them. And that is about managing money, family life, bringing up children, parenting and about their spiritual life. Quite often they take that out of the box as well and they become members of some congregation or other, maybe Anglican, maybe Baptist, maybe Free Church, maybe Buddhist, I don't know, you don't often get the

news back but periodically you do. Quite often they have joined some sort of congregation. So maybe that is the bit that we are doing.

**So you are happy to be a state servant?**

Hey, wherever my vocation takes me. I am happy? I don't know, "When you were in prison you visited me", it is hardly that, is it? But it is in a sense as well, I think..... I used to be a youth worker and I think that we put a great deal of energy into working with adults and that is important but for every one that is working with adults in the justice system we should be working ten times as much before they get here. We really should because what we are doing now is patching up those people, patching up inadequate people or people with inadequate skills for our society; if I hear anybody else diagnosed with a personality disorder you know erm. I mean thankfully they are starting to understand a bit more. But broken, inadequate, erm socially inept, poor learning skills, all these labels that I have seen prisoner people, basically broken people for whatever reason, we should be finding them much, much earlier than that, much, much earlier.

**I was going to say it is strange how the same groups of people keep turning up in prisons isn't it?**

Oh absolutely, absolutely, I don't know whether they were always part of society but somehow disappeared in to some underbelly or not but people haven't changed over hundreds or thousands of years in a sense of the kind of people we are. The oldest joke in the world is 7,000 BC and is quite funny actually but it is one that we tell today; toilet humour was popular then and it is now. We don't change basically as people and yet we have seemingly this great mass of broken, poor coping people; is it society that has come beyond us? I doubt it.

**Somebody did say that the poor you have always with you.**

Yes, and the poor in all sorts of ways.

**And I suppose the poor end up in prison isn't it?**

But these days they end up in prison. I know a few prisoners that have come back in here because they had nowhere to go and just the other day a prisoner asked the judge; he could have walked out of court [but] he said, "Well, if you gave me an extra 3 months then I could sort something out and get a hostel; otherwise I will be straight in the pub and will be back in prison, your honour." And he got an extra 3 months to allow him to get in touch with NACRO and in other words his sentence wasn't long enough for him to get things sorted; he knows what he needs but he will always be that sort of person.

**Right that takes me on to positively my last question.**

OK.

**And thank you for giving me the opening, and this is a little unfair because it is something that was said while we were having lunch.**

OK.

**So it was off the machine, and that is that you would never be a prison abolitionist.**

No, I would never be a prison abolitionist. There have always been places that lock people up, sometimes we were just waiting to transport them all or execute them but there are some people that I am glad that they are in here and not outside. Mostly you meet people who have done bad things; now and again you meet a bad person - and it is a strange debate, isn't it? - but yes, just now and again there are people that have just..... are not safe to be on the street. Maybe because of illness or maybe just because they are very bad, and I suppose we could talk about evil in that sense, which is difficult to talk about, yes.

**So are there lots of people who shouldn't be in prison?**

If you are thinking about prison as a place where we put somebody in safe, secure custody while we deal and help them, well prison is the right term but a different kind of prison. A prison where.... here we deal with disciplinary stuff, you know; people have got all sorts of problems but what about the people that are ill who cause them to break the law? Because the law is one thing and doing right and wrong is something else isn't it; that is evident if you are living in America where it is legal in one town to do something and not legal in the next town, needs to be consistent. So breaking the law, let's talk about that, so if my illness causes me to break the law, I am very ill, then the illness needs treating, that is a certain kind of custodial. If I have a disorder...(asks someone to switch Hoover off) sorry about that. If I have a disorder of some sort or dysfunction of some sort that is a different kind of treatment that I would need and a different kind of custody perhaps. If I am really evil maybe that is a very different kind of custody; we seem to put this banner of prison and put all into the same building. Here we have a mentally ill ward, we have a physically ill ward, we have a Reintegration Unit where people who are not very good at coping. We have another landing for people who need treatment because of alcohol or drugs, we have another landing where people need to be kept separate for their safety because they are sex offenders or they are very vulnerable in some other way, all under the same roof, all dealt with by the same rules and all dealt with by the same people.

**Yes but you certainly believe in the reality of evil?**

Oh yes, and I have tussled with this, I will get back to that. Yes sorry, the biographer, the official biographer of West, yes a bit more up to date than the other people we talked about, was talking a while ago, I shouldn't quote other people I suppose, but he set me to thinking when he said something like, "You meet people who have done wrong things and then you meet the evil people. But then there are the Wests of this world who are a quantum leap," and he used the word quantum leap, ..... almost to the point of, "Are they still human beings?" Now maybe there are a handful of people that we can name that perhaps fall into that category and maybe we have met one or two in our time in prison. And that is something else, that is, that is a whole different debate. I have met evil people but then there are these one or two

people and you wonder why are they still referred to as human beings and where is the soul?

**Does that... does your assessment of them as evil people come from, I don't want to sound pretentious, but does it come from a kind of social experience or does it come from a kind of theological sort of model or theological notion or some blend of the two?**

I don't know where it comes from really; I think to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others you have to recognise your own, you have to recognise your own potential and a question that I was asked many years ago was would I kill and I thought about that theologically and all the rest of it and I thought, "No killing is wrong," and then I thought, "Yes I would actually, I could put myself in many situations where I would." And then I thought, "Well whether it was against the law or with the law's blessing would it make a difference?" And I thought, "Well that is another situation perhaps where I would break the law," you know?..... So knowing your own strengths and weaknesses gives you some recognition and gives you insight into other people. So it is not just a theological reflection of how evil can be it is about the experience of meeting other people and their potential.

**Would you say that is a pre-condition of chaplaincy, knowing your own strengths and weaknesses?**

No, you would soon find out after about 3 or 4 weeks. I think that it is a prerequisite really erm otherwise you would find it may break you. It may not but you would find it very, very difficult and a certain .....that sounds hard doesn't it, you know. We all have vulnerabilities, but we hide them because people here will make fun of them.

**And spot them?**

And spot them, oh yes they will spot them, they get to know you very, very well. I have had orderlies who have put their shoes on ready for work long before I have reached their cell door; they knew it was me because of the way that I walk; I haven't a clue but they knew. People spot everything about you, everything, and they will pick up on your vulnerabilities, and if you cannot put up with their challenge, if it intimidates you, you are going to have such a hard time.

**Yes, but you still enjoy it.**

I love it, I am 60 in, counting the days really and it used to be that 60 was retirement and because chaplaincy was a shortage grade they could extend year by year and I was always thinking, "I really don't want to finish at 60." Anyway the law has changed now and they are stuck with me for another 5 years or until my legs drop off.

**Yes, I am going to end it there; that's a lovely line to finish on.**

Yes, thanks.

## **Appendix 5 Codes and classifications**

### **a. Initial projected classifications**

Isolation/alienation (heterotopia?)

Prison and/or parish

Dual loyalty (HMPS & Church)

Role conflict (minister & manager)

Training for chaplaincy

Story teller

Story keeper

Time traveller

Walker

Holy presence

### **b. CODING LIST 1**

**ANECDOTES**

**ANGLICAN**

**BELIEF** (other people's)

**CHURCH** (mainstream)

**COMMUNITY**

**FAITH**

**FUNCTION/ROLE**

- conciliator/go-between
- communication(s)
- listener/receiver (pastor/counsellor?)
- establishment conscience/"irritant" (prophetic?)
- "big questions"
- holy presence/religious "expert" (priest)
- guardian of safe/sacred space

- saviour of souls
- preventing reoffending/resettlement *and/or* mission
- mission
- enabler/facilitator

## **HETEROTOPIA**

## **LIMITS & BOUNDARIES**

## **ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

(vicarious, incarnational)

## **PRINCIPLES & VALUES**

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

- with governors/management
- with staff & their families
- with prisoners & their families
- with Anglican hierarchy/diocese
- WITH COE/CIW hierarchy/diocese

## **ROUTINES** (processes, rituals)

## **STYLE OF MINISTRY**

## **TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT** ("professional"?)

### **c. CODING LIST 2**

## **ADDRESS MODES**

## **ANECDOTES**

## **BELIEF** (*other people's*)

## **CHURCH**(*mainstream*)

## **COMMUNITY**

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

## **DRESS**

## **FAITH**

- *conciliator/go-between*
- *communications*
- *counsellor*
- *establishment official*
- *manager*
- *establishment conscience*
- *“big questions”*
- *holy presence /religious expert*
- *guardian of safe/sacred space*
- *religious conversion*
- *preventing reoffending/ resettlement*
- *mission*
- *enabler/ facilitator*
- *“bad news” bearer*
- *worship & services*
- *problem solver*
- *storykeeper/teller*

## **FUNCTION/ROLE**

## **GENDER**

## **IDENTITY (or FUNCTION?)**

## **ISOLATION & EXCLUSION** *(heterotopia)*

## **IMAGERY**

## **LIMITS & BOUNDARIES** *formal& informal*

## **LINE MANAGEMENT**

## **LITURGY**

## **MINISTRY STYLE**

## **MULTI-FAITH**

## **ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

**PRINCIPLE & VALUES**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

- *with governors & management*
- *with staff (&their families)*
- *with prisoners (and their families)*
- *with Anglican hierarchy/diocese*
- *with other chaplains*

**RESTRICTIONS & CONSTRAINTS**

**RITUALS, ROUTINES & PROCESSES**

**ROMAN CATHOLICS**

**SELF PRESENTATION**

**SEX OFFENDERS**

**TENSIONS**

**THEOLOGY**

**TIME**

**TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT (HMPS/professional)**

**d. CODING LIST 3**

**ANGLICAN**

- *Identity*
- *Bishop*
- *Diocese*
- *Leadership & co-ordination*
- *Ministry model*
- *Ministry style*
- *Prison as parish*
- *Default*
- *Legal*

- *Status*
- *Tensions*
- *Role*
- *Professionalization*
- *Expectations*

**AUTHORITY**

**CHANGE** (*in role or function*)

**CHURCH**

**COMMUNITY**

**CONFLICT**

**CONSTRAINTS**

**CONTESTING ROLE & STATUS**

**CO-ORDINATOR**

**JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**FUNCTION/ROLE**

- *Intermediary*
- *Communications*
- *Counsellor*
- *Establishment official*
- *Manager*
- *Prophetic/ conscience*
- *"big questions"*
- *Holy presence/ religious "expert"*
- *Priest*
- *Guardian of safe/sacred space*
- *Preventing reoffending*
- *Resettlement*
- *Mission/ conversion*
- *Enabler/facilitator*

- *“bad news”*
- *Worship & services*
- *Problem solver*
- *Storykeeper/teller*
- *Pastor/pastoral*
- *Prophet*

**GENDER**

**IDENTITY**

**ISOLATION & EXCLUSION** (*heterotopia*)

**IMAGERY**

**LIMITS & BOUNDARIES** formal & informal

**LINE MANAGEMENT**

**LITURGY**

**MINISTRY STYLE**

**MULTI FAITH** *Muslim & RC*

**NARRATIVE**

**ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

**PERSONAL**

**PRINCIPLES & VALUES**

**PRISON CULTURE**

**PROFESSIONAL**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

- *Governors & management*
- *Staff (& their families)*
- *Prisoners(& their families)*
- *Anglican hierarchy/diocese*
- *other chaplains*
- *Chaplaincy HQ*

## **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

- *SORI*
- *Sycamore Tree*

## **RITUAL**

## **SECULARISM**

## **SELF PRES'N**

- *Address*
- *Dress*

## **SEX OFFENDERS**

## **STORIES**

## **TENSIONS**

## **THEOLOGY**

## **TIME**

## **TRAINING**

### **d. DATASET LIST FROM CODINGS**

- Adjustment/ survival
- Anglican
- Bishop and diocese
- Candle-lighting
- Chapel space
- Compromise
- Constraints
- Function and role (1<sup>st</sup> sift)
- Gender
- Identity
- Ministry style
- Multifaith
- (Olympics chaplaincy)

- Pastoralia
- Praxis
- Prisoners
- Prison as parish
- Respect
- Restoration and affirmation
- Ritual
- Staff & colleagues
- Status & default
- Team dynamics: harmony & dissonance

The final code set is the list of chapter headings and sub-headings which comprise the table of contents. This can be seen as a set of tree nodes.

## **Appendix 6 Candle lighting: email to respondents**

30/05/2012 01:16PM

Subject: Touching base

Dear

It seems a long time since we met and spoke, so I thought that I would touch base and let you know that the project is progressing. This wouldn't have been possible without your responses and those of other chaplains. I'm still grateful for that and hope that I repay your time and reflections adequately. You might have wondered what was happening as a result of our conversation so I wanted to let you know that I hope to present the thesis in a year from now. There is one aspect of our ministry I would like to invite you to tell me about using your own current experience.

### **Candle lighting**

Some chaplains have spoken about enabling prisoners to light candles in chapel (or multi faith area) as an important function of their ministry. I should like to form a clearer and more detailed picture of this feature across different kinds of establishment nationwide. So, if you are willing to do so, I'd be grateful if you could tell me in any way you want about candle lighting in your establishment. You could comment upon why and when it is asked for or offered, where and how it happens. As before, though, I'm interested in how *you* want to reflect upon it. Anecdotes and examples would be welcome too. You can respond at [PhillipsPM@cf.ac.uk](mailto:PhillipsPM@cf.ac.uk) as above.

I'm very aware of the demands upon your time so a paragraph would be fine, a sentence even. It would be great if you can respond to this further request but I shall understand if you feel unable to.

Thank you for help so far and for any response you can make to this further request.

With all best wishes

Peter

## Appendix 7 Giving bad news: email to respondents

11 February 2013 15:59

**Subject:** Giving bad news

Dear

Even at this late stage as I write up the data and analysis of my research one or two surprising gaps are emerging because I did not ask the question or probe sufficiently. People responded fully and thoughtfully when I asked about candle lighting and that really enriched the narrative.

A larger gap is the virtual absence of "giving bad news", specifically information about the death of family or friends. Whilst it isn't a statutory duty, nevertheless it is a task which often falls to chaplains. I guess we can all vividly recall individual cases; probably, too, each of us has preferred ways and places to give such news. It's this sort of reflection I'm asking you to tap into. You might want to:

- recount a specific instance
- outline any procedure you try to adhere to
- describe a sequence from being asked by staff to do this, to subsequent support - if any was asked for
- approach it quite differently in your own way

Any of these are fine; I shall be grateful for anything you can send me. I am aware that I'm asking you to spend time on something not essential but I also know that some chaplains like taking time to reflect on their practice and experience. As in everything strict anonymity applies. If you prefer not to respond I shall understand.

In the meantime, I hope that you are able to exercise your ministry more or less as you would wish in a system that seems to be defined by continuous change.

With all best wishes

Peter

## **Appendix 8 Respondent profiles**

These data are necessarily brief and exclude much interesting detail which would identify individuals. Three respondents are in Welsh prisons and are clergy in the disestablished Church in Wales; none of them are Welsh speakers. Three respondents were born and brought up in former colonies. One of them says the daily office in the joint first language of their country; another is a former Salvation Army Officer and bandsman. A number have been chaplains in other contexts; military, university and hospital. Three have been self-employed and one has worked in an extraction industry. One respondent is designated neither as co-ordinator nor as Anglican despite fulfilling that role; to identify their exact post would be to identify the person.

The details were gathered using the form below, often as a lead-in to the dialogue.

<b>RESPONDENT DETAILS</b>			
NAME:		SIGNIFIER:	
DATE:		TIME:	PLACE:
<b>01</b>	GENDER / AGE	GENDER	AGE
<b>02</b>	LENGTH OF SERVICE HMPS/PARISH	PRISON	PARISH
<b>03</b>	OTHER EMPLOYMENT: NATURE/LENGTH	NATURE	LENGTH
<b>04</b>	TYPE & SIZE OF ESTABLISHMENT	PRIVATE/STATE	SIZE
<b>05</b>	PREVIOUS ESTABLISHMENT TYPES (IF ANY)	CAT	SIZE
<b>06</b>	CO-ORDINATING CHAPLAIN/REGIONAL/OTHER?		
<b>07</b>	OTHER ESTABLISHMENT RESPONSIBILITIES		
<b>08</b>	CHURCH RECOGNITION/OFFICE		

**OWN ESTIMATED ECCLESIOLOGICAL INDEX**

EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC  
 MAX 5    4    3    2    1 1    2    3    4    5 MAX

**OWN ESTIMATED THEOLOGICAL INDEX**

CONSERVATIVE LIBERAL  
 MAX 5    4    3    2    1 1    2    3    4    5 MAX

**ADAM** (cat C)

Anglican chaplain      Age 58

17 years as chaplain. Previously in other category prisons and other chaplaincy.

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5    Theology: liberal 4/5

**ALEXANDRA** (cat B)

Anglican chaplain      Age 49

4 years as chaplain after 8 years in parish. Previously medical professional

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5    Theology: liberal 5/5

**ALF** (cat B)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 51

20 years as chaplain after 7 years in parish (incl 3 years as substitute chaplain).

Regional responsibility.

Ecclesiology: catholic 5/5    Theology: liberal 3/5

**ANGUS** (cat B/C)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 63

15 years as chaplain after 25 years in parish ministry.

ACCT assessor. Staff care & welfare team leader.

Ecclesiology: catholic 1/5    Theology: liberal 3/5

**BARBARA**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 54

3 years in chaplaincy. Previously teacher and counsellor.

SMT, Staff Care & Welfare co-ordinator, children & families, Visitor Centre line manager, Training committee.

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5    Theology: liberal 5/5

**BECKY** (cat B)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 44

11 years as chaplain after 3 years in parish

Previously chaplain in women's prison

Experience as regional chaplain

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5 Theology: liberal 5/5

**BEN (cat C)**

Co-ordinating chaplain Age 56

5 years as chaplain after 26 years in parish

Senior ACCT assessor Media liaison

Ecclesiology: catholic 5/5 Theology: liberal 5/5

**CEDRIC (YOI)**

Anglican chaplain Age 59

21 years as chaplain after 11 years in parish

Suicide awareness assessor

SMT, Regional responsibility

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5 Theology: liberal 1/5

**CHARLIE (YOI)**

Senior chaplain Age 53

13 years in parish after "various occupations". Singer in rock band. Cathedral canon.

Ecclesiology: Evangelical 4/5 Theology: liberal 3/5

**CLAUDIA (women)**

Co-ordinating chaplain Age 61

16 years as chaplain after 8 years in parish. Cathedral canon.

Regional responsibility.

Ecclesiology: evangelical 4/5 Theology: liberal 4/5

**COLIN** (cat B)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 57

10 years as chaplain after 16 years in parish

S.O.R.I. co-ordinator

Ecclesiology: evangelical 1/5    Theology: liberal 1/5

**DANIEL** (YOI)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 45

12 years as chaplain after 4 years in parish.

Staff care and welfare team

Experience as regional chaplain

Ecclesiology: evangelical 3-4/5    Theology: conservative 3-4/5 (“Though I’m socially more liberal.”)

**DENNIS** (cat B)

Anglican chaplain      Age 59

16 years as chaplain (incl women’s prison) after 11 years in parish.

Ecclesiology: catholic 4/5    Theology: liberal 4/5

**ESTHER** (women)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 64

10 years as prison chaplain (1 in cat A). Previously FE lecturer.

Staff care & welfare team member (formerly lead), diversity committee, security committee, performance recognition committee, training committee.

Ecclesiology: catholic 2-3/5    Theology: liberal 3/5

**FREDDIE** (private cat B)

Anglican chaplain      Age 58

10 years as chaplain after 16 years in parish

Member of staff care and welfare team; also involved in family liaison

Ecclesiology: evangelical 3/5    Theology: conservative 2/5

**GEORGE (cat A)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 61

27 years as chaplain after 9 years in parish.

Delegated responsibility at national level. Formerly co-ordinating chaplain.

Ecclesiology: evangelical 3/5    Theology: conservative 3/5

**GERVASE (cat B)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 33

5 years as chaplain in male & female prisons after 4 years in parish

Ecclesiology: catholic 4/5    Theology: liberal 1/5

**GOUGH (cat B/YOI)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 54

8 years as chaplain after 17 years in parish

Race relations team, security committee, health & safety, energy efficiency, safer custody. Formerly mining engineer.

Ecclesiology: evangelical 3-4/5    Theology: conservative 3- 4/5

**HARRIET (IRC)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 53

13 years as chaplain after 5 years in parish and other chaplaincy

Ecclesiology: catholic 2/5    Theology: liberal 4/5

**HEATHER (cat C)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 43

16 years as chaplain in male and female prisons after 3 years in parish.

Ecclesiology: catholic 1/5    Theology: liberal 4/5

**HENRY (cat B/C)**

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 62

20 years as chaplain after 15 years in parish

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5 Theology: liberal 3/5

**IMOGEN** (cat B)

Anglican chaplain Age 43

5 years as chaplain after 6 years in parish. Previously sales manager.

Involvement with restorative justice activities.

Ecclesiology: catholic 2/5 Theology: conservative 1/5

**JEANETTE** (cat B)

Anglican chaplain Age: 63

8 years as chaplain after career including sales & personnel management.

Ecclesiology: catholic 4/5 Theology: liberal 5/5

**JULIET** (private cat B)

Anglican chaplain Age 50

6 years as chaplain after 4 years in parish as NSM. Previously medical professional.

Staff care and welfare team Family liaison officer

Ecclesiology: not given Theology: not given

**IAIN** (YOI)

Co-ordinating chaplain Age 45

10 years as chaplain after 11 years in parish

Experience as regional chaplain

Ecclesiology: catholic 3/5 Theology: liberal 3/5

**MAURICE** (YOI)

Co-ordinating chaplain Age 51

15 years as chaplain in UK. Earlier prison ministry abroad. Musician.

Ecclesiology: catholic & evangelical 3/5 Theology: liberal & conservative 4/5

**PAULINE** (cat C)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 55

13 years as chaplain after 4 years NSM in parish and teaching abroad.

Member of diocesan well-being group

Ecclesiology: evangelical 1/5    Theology: liberal 3/5

**PENNY** (cat C)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 47

13 years as chaplain in male and female prisons, and other chaplaincy

Ecclesiology: catholic 4/5    Theology: liberal 5/5

**ROBIN** (cat C)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 59

21 years as chaplain after 11 years in parish

ACCT assessor    SMT member

Ecclesiology: evangelical 3/5    Theology: conservative 3/5

**ROGER** (cat D)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 60

24 years as chaplain after 5 years in parish and 6 in military chaplaincy

Experience in other categories including maximum security

Ecclesiology: evangelical/catholic =    Theology: conservative 2/5

**RONALD** (cat B)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 55

13 years as chaplain in male and female prisons after 8 years in parish

Ecclesiology: catholic 2/5    Theology: liberal 3/5

**TOM** (cat C)

Co-ordinating chaplain      Age 50

8 years as chaplain after NHS chaplaincy

Head of Safer Custody. Lead on Reducing Reoffending, ACCT assessor

Ecclesiology: catholic 4/5 Theology: liberal 5/5

## **Appendix 9      Glossary of prison & other terms used in the thesis**

**ABBM** Process by which applicants are selected to train for ordination in the Church of England.

**ACCT** Assessment, Care in Custody, Treatment. A scheme for observing and supporting prisoners who are thought to be at risk of self harm or suicide attempts; previously known as SH2051.

**App** Application made by prisoners to access different personnel and departments e.g. a chaplaincy app to see a chaplain.

**Block** Also **Seg**(regation unit). Accommodation for prisoners i) whose behaviour has threatened the good order and discipline of the prison and/or ii) whose presence on open location is considered to represent a danger to others or to themselves.

**CARATS** Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, Throughcare Department which aims to help prisoners overcome habits of addiction.

### **Categorisation of adult male prisoners**

**Cat A** Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the state and for whom the aim must be to make escape impossible.

**Cat B** Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary, but for whom escape must be made very difficult.

**Cat C** Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions, but who do not have the resources and will to make a determined escape attempt.

**Cat D** Prisoners who can be reasonably trusted in open conditions.

### **Categorisation of adult female prisoners**

The security categories of women prisoners differ from those of male prisoners. The official definition of female prisoners' security categories are as follows:

**Cat A** Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the state, no matter how unlikely that escape might be, and for whom the aim must be to make escape impossible.

**Closed** Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary, but who present too high a risk for open conditions, cannot be trusted in open conditions or for whom open conditions are not appropriate.

**Semi-Open** Prisoners who present a low risk to the public but who require a level of physical perimeter security to deter escape.

**Open** Prisoners assessed as low risk who can reasonably be trusted in open conditions and for whom open conditions are appropriate.

**C & R** Control and Restraint; a graduated scheme of controlling refractory prisoners or regaining control of an individual or physical area by minimum use of force and tactical intervention (MUFTI).

**Canteen** The facility through which prisoners can buy selected items AND the items themselves.

**CG** Chaplain General to prisons.

**Chaplaincy** Can denote the exercise of the chaplain's ministry, the team of chaplains AND their base in the establishment.

**CIW** Church in Wales.

**COE** Church of England.

**DG** Director General of HMPS. (Chief Executive from 2011).

**Director** The governing Governor of a privately run prison.

**HMP** Her Majesty's Prison. The descriptor applies both to state and privately operated prisons.

**HMPS** Her Majesty's Prison Service.

**HMYOI** Establishment or part of establishment for all prisoners aged between 18 and 21.

**IMB** Independent Monitoring Board (lay people appointed to enter prisons, observe, listen, take up issues and report.)

**IRC** Immigration removal centre.

**ISPP** Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection.

**KPT** Key performance target, item in the establishment Business Plan.

**Lifer** A prisoner serving a sentence of life imprisonment, with a specified minimum tariff. Prisoners released on licence are always liable to recall to prison.

**Main** Main location. Residential accommodation for all prisoners except those on VPU(qv), in Healthcare or the segregation unit.

**No 1** The governing Governor of a state prison (colloquial).

**OBU** Offending Behaviour Unit, otherwise known as Probation.

**OMU** Offender Management Unit.

**Open prison** An establishment without a physical perimeter. (cat D)

**Orderly** A prisoner allocated to work in a specific area of the establishment e.g chapel orderly or gym orderly.

**PEI** Physical Education Instructor.

**PO** Principal Officer, the highest rank of uniformed prison officer until 2010.

**PSO** Prison Service Order.

**PSC** Prison Service Chaplaincy.

**RC** Roman Catholic.

**Receptions** Most recently admitted prisoners AND the area of the prison where such prisoners are processed. A statutory duty for chaplains is to interview new receptions as soon as possible after their arrival, hence “doing the receptions”.

**Rule 45** The provision under which prisoners can request segregation for their own protection, hence prison usage, “on the Rule”.

**Seg** See Block.

**SIR** Security Information Report.

**SMT** Senior Management Team.

**SO** Senior Officer, a higher rank of prison officer. (Appointment to the rank of Principal Officer was discontinued in 2010.)

**SO & 2/3** Prisoners who offer a threat of serious violence to staff are not usually unlocked by a single officer but by a Senior Officer and two or three other officers.

**SOTP** Sex Offender Treatment Programme.

**SPDR** Staff Performance and Development Record.

**Statutory** Chaplains’ duties as defined in Prisons Act 1952 and Prison Rules.

**Duties** These are: to visit all new receptions as soon as possible after their arrival, to visit all prisoners in the health care centre daily, to visit all prisoners under segregation and to conduct services appropriate to their faith or denomination.

**SORI** Support for offenders and restoration inside. A five day restorative practice based programme developed and disseminated from HMP Cardiff.

**STP** Sycamore Tree Programme. A restorative practice based programme facilitated by Prison Fellowship UK.

**Tally** Numbered token given to staff in exchange for keys of the same number.

**Visits** Apart from the obvious, it can denote the area where visits take place, the department which organizes them and the period of time in which they happen.

**VPU** Vulnerable Prisoner Unit. A wing or part of a wing where prisoners are segregated under Rule 45 (qv).

**YO/YOI** Prisoner aged between 18 and 21/ Young Offender Institution.

## Appendix 10 Further narratives and stories

### Daniel

**How far, if at all you are aware of a different kind of ministry or a different flavour of ministry with somebody who has just picked up a life or an IPP as against somebody who is doing 6 weeks, 6 months, that sort of thing?**

It is completely different, the relationship with them is completely different; they have a completely different view of what lies ahead of them. They often sort of, I suppose, think that until it dawns on them that they are going to spend such a long time in custody and they need to make the most of it. You get a lot of short termers who are, "Well I won't bother doing that because I am out soon," and just aren't thinking, just aren't in that sort of mode.

I think that actually the prison, the Prison Service and the penal system would benefit from longer sentences with prisoners because if you give them longer sentences then you can work with them. You forget that so many of the guys they're maybe on the list as a first time offender but actually they have offended loads of times out in the community beforehand before they ever end up in custody.

I remember I did an exercise up here once with a group of about a dozen prisoners and I put up on the OHP screen a list of prisoners. I said, "These are prisoners who have been in here before you and these are their crimes," and they were like robbery and theft, and "These are all first time offenders. What sort of sentence would they get?" And they were going through the list and, other than the murder, they were saying, "Well these guys they wouldn't get a custodial for that; why did they get custodial?" I said, "Well actually they were previous prisoners here but they all got the same sentence. Death." And there was just complete silence and, you know, they just couldn't believe it. I said, "Yes, these guys stayed in the same cells you are staying in and they were first time offenders, committed these offences and they were executed for them." How the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other!

**Did that make an impression on them?** It did; it just all went silent and (they were) quite dumb struck by it because now everything is orientated about, you know, giving somebody a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance and human rights, all indoctrinated about, you know, human rights and you know it is....

**Do I detect a degree of scepticism there?** Oh no. I believe in sort of basic human rights but human rights are, well I suppose as a Christian following the scriptures you believe in human responsibility. You don't think that you have a right to life really because it is a God given gift, it is God who gives and takes away life, and yes.

So human rights have become, I don't know, well actually my personal view is that we have had up here groups of prisoners and local trainee lawyers who have come in and they spend most of their time talking to the prisoners about their human rights and how great human rights are. And actually if you think about it, it's lawyers who love human rights because they are the ones that make the money out of it. It is a lawyers' charter: it is a benevolent fund, so you know it is OK talking about what your rights are but you equally have got to talk about also what people's responsibilities are. That is why I like courses like Sycamore Tree and Restorative Justice because it is both, isn't it?

My initial prompt seeks to explore the possibility of a causal relationship between length of sentence and ministerial style, between temporal factors and praxis, a possibility emerging from other data. Daniel's total response could be thought of as the narrative superstructure within which the story of the OHP exercise is embedded (Cortazzi 1996, 71). His response to the prompt itself is brief and general. His observation about "short termers" leads him in a different direction signaled by "I think that.."; this takes him away from personal biography into political comment while in the following sentence the temporary change of personal pronoun seems to legitimate the opinion by universalising it. Using the evaluation model the abstract seems at first to be contained in my prompt, but the orientation "I remember I did an exercise...." stems from his own adaptation of my prompt. The story therefore elaborates the point which he wants to make, which is political rather than personal. The brief, almost exclamatory evaluation "How the pendulum..." seems to signal an end to the story, its imaging suggesting a strong correlation between personal and political. My question, "**Did that make...**" is a closed version of "What happened next?" Daniel's response begins with "real" events ("silent ...dumbstruck") but he links it, apparently deliberately, with more personal/ political comment by using the conjunction "because". At this point the tight narrative structuring of the story crumbles and the expression becomes more generalized ("everything ....all indoctrinated") and obviously rhetorical ("a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance"). The threefold use of "you know" seems to invite, if not actually presuppose, my agreement and builds towards the climactic words "human rights". Although the story is clearly finished by now he has only sketched a coda; my prompt picks up on his tone rather than his lexis. Daniel's first response is immediately qualified ("sort of basic human rights but..."). He attempts to anchor his opinion in his theology ("Christian following the scriptures"); while he clearly wants to detail his circumscribed view of "human rights" he cannot and seems about to begin another story in ("we have had up here a group of"). Instead, though, he veers off into a sequence of sceptical comments about a professional group whom he perceives to be in collusion with the prisoners, expressed with significant passion ("most of their time....how great human rights are....love ...benevolent fund") At the end of the narrative, however, Daniel gives a reasoned basis for his involvement in a specific programme.

This narrative unit effectively uses the initial prompt as a jumping off point for a narrative in which he rapidly moves from the personal to the political, expressing what may well be a rehearsed account of his views about sentencing and its effects; for much of the narrative up to “**Do I detect..**” there is nothing to distinguish it as being spoken by a chaplain rather than any other prison official. The account traverses a wide area encompassing theological comment (as one might expect from a chaplain), criticism of another professional group and, embedded centrally in it all, a story about institutional practice which illustrates for Daniel a reality of one aspect of institutional and organisational culture. That the story itself may have been told previously is suggested by the use of direct speech set against reported comments so that the result is neither monologue nor dialogue but a semi-dramatised account, a conscious performance. It remains open to speculation that Daniel might not have expressed himself so completely both in content and verbal style if he had not known and trusted me as a fellow practitioner.

The story is amenable to analysis by lexical signaling up to the penultimate question, though not necessarily in a sequential pattern. The situational signals are phrases and words such as “long time”, “custody”, “short termers”, “prison”, “penal”, “longer sentences”. The problem is delineated (rather than defined) by “I won’t bother..”, “aren’t in that sort of mode” and “offended loads of times”. This method reveals that the account is short on solution and evaluation; solution is suggested by “benefit from longer sentences” and implicitly by “courses like Sycamore Tree...” though this has to be retrieved from the very end of the narrative and makes a more conclusive evaluation than “How the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other,” which Daniel seems to have intended as the end of his story and, possibly, the narrative.

The narrative is also suffused with implications of the possible underlying status relationship between Daniel and the young male prisoners. (It would be misleading to speak of a power differential since Daniel talks elsewhere about assisting men with learning problems and his chapel is surely the only one with an altar at one end and a pool table at the other, a provision wrested from the Governor.) The talk about sentencing is subtly intensified by the references to the death penalty and this appears to be sanctified by “it is a God given gift.” There seems to be a disjunction between rights, which are of human origin, and responsibilities emanating from the relationship with God. Daniel reports that the Sycamore Tree course helps him to resolve this conflict and it is this resolution which brings the coda and the whole narrative to a conclusion, lit, as it were from within, by the brief story, one which could have served a number of other narrative purposes.

Gough’s first story both sounds and appears unrehearsed because he had no forewarning of the question, refers (albeit at the end) to a recent encounter as a starting point and relies upon a temporal sequence of events for its organization, although these are interspersed with the narrator’s observations about himself and his actions as he recalls and reconstructs them. His interpolations as narrator, commenting on himself as recollected actor, “create the realities they purport to describe,” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, 167) and, taken with purposive lexical signaling, show the construction of a “performative act, through which identities are

enacted, actions are justified and recounted events are retrospectively constructed.” (2006, 167) What the transcript cannot convey is Gough’s strong regional accent and his clipped, almost brusque delivery, both of which heighten the humour of the account for the listener. Since it is a long passage I have subdivided it into paragraphs. In addition I have formatted it to suggest the dramatization inherent in Gough’s retelling.

### **Gough 1**

#### **What would you say is the most important thing you can do as an Anglican chaplain here in this prison?**

I think probably the most important thing is to bring love to the loveless.... erm..... I’ve got in the back of my mind Samuel Crossman’s great hymn *My song is love unknown, but to the loveless shown that they might lovely be*. I’m a bit reluctant because it sounds a bit patronising to use the term “the loveless” but I think the people I’m driving at are the unloved, the unappreciated, the forgotten about, cast off in all sorts of ways..... people who’ve been brought up in an environment where violence has been core, you get what you want by fighting for it.

This was exemplified for me by a young man who’s now back in again for the third time since I met him and I suspect been in and out several times before that in Young Offenders as well. Two or three years back..... I had to go and tell him his mother had been beaten nearly to death in a botched burglary.

As the story unfolded on this one something I picked from him, something I picked up from other people - a lad of rather diminutive stature had broken into her house and found that she was at home with a friend. The particular bloke I was talking to is a young man of hefty build so I’m guessing that his mother might be of similar ilk - compare him with a bulldog is what comes to mind. I did say to him, you know, “What sort of person is your mother?” because he was very angry. I said, “Well try and look at it from his point of view,” because I had an idea - (because he came in here, he was a little fella, a squirt) - I said, “Is your mother the shy retiring sort who’d say, ‘Excuse me you’ve just broken into my house; would you mind leaving?’”

“No,” he said, “she’d have got up and killed him.”

“I did wonder.”

“She had a baseball bat.”

I said, “Does she play a lot of baseball?”

“No.”

“I just wondered why she’d got a baseball bat in the house.”

I knew darn well. So I said, “I’m guessing that if she’d got to the baseball bat she’d have hit him very hard, wouldn’t she?”

“Do you know my mother?” he said.

It just struck me that we’d got a story going on; the scenario was this young man had broken into the house, come up against somebody built like a brick

outhouse, I suspect, or similar, wasn't going to let him get away with it; [her] friend similarly built was going off to let a big dog out of the kitchen, barking by this time and it wasn't a poodle.

So this young lad's then got a choice of what does he do and he sees this baseball bat and I think probably in an instant he thinks to himself, either I pick up the baseball bat and hit her with it or she's going to hit me with it and if I hit her with it, it's no use just giving her a little tap on the head because she'll get up and...you know... so having hit her once with it he's got to make sure she stops down so in fact probably two or three blows, making sure, and of course it's not funny but it does have this funny background if you look at it in one way. Similarly attacks the friend with a screwdriver before she can get to the kitchen to let the dog out but again does he just sit there and say, "Oh, I've broken into the wrong house I'll stand here and let that dog get me"? It aint going to happen.

But this is the point, the underlying ethos of violence, self defence and all this sort of stuff that's gone on in both families is probably symptomatic and what I can do there is try and bring some love into that place. I had to go and break it to him that night; I remember still to this day. I couldn't get him over here because it was Thursday night, prayed for him there, lit a candle for him. I prayed most of the night for his mother who I didn't know; she wasn't expected to make it through the night but she did. I went on praying. She's now almost walking two years on so it's been a long haul. She wasn't expected to come out alive, a tribute to the power of prayer.

I've just seen him come back in and yeah, you know, "Hiya" ..... a while ago a bit of bother transferring him to another establishment because he was too young to be here or something. He didn't want to go so he smashed his cell up and I was able to intervene a little bit for him. I said, "Look," you know, "you're going to get nowhere, they're going to go and come and drag you out and you won't get back here at all. Whereas if you go, keep your head down, explain the situation, you've got a chance of coming back," and being close to his partner which is what I think he wanted, why he was so agitated. He did calm down, he went off, and I saw him again a few weeks later and he says, "You were right." Sadly, he's been out and come back in again; I haven't found out what's what.

That probably exemplifies it – to come in and bring love and possibly light into a loveless and dark place.

This narrative is less susceptible to the Labov template since evaluation is implied at different points throughout the narrative superstructure and the two stories embedded in it. The total narrative might be seen as the extended story of Gough's interaction with the prisoner; seen in this way, the template becomes more easily applicable. He picks up my phrase "most important thing" and combines it with his own "bring love to the loveless", simultaneously referencing it to a hymn, a quasi-liturgical source, and stepping back from an omniscient narrator role, "it sounds a

bit patronising” whilst maintaining a reflective, evaluative stance. The opening ten lines could be thought of as the abstract from which the story grows but even at the very beginning he is evaluating what is to come and, indeed, echoes the opening in the final sentence, so framing the total account.

Gough unwittingly reflects Labov’s structure by signalling new stages in the narrative: “This was exemplified...” is mirrored in the final sentence, strengthening the frame. The whole sentence may be read as orientation in the story within a larger story.

“As the story unfolded...”; Gough is aware of the storying nature of the interaction and his own role in co-construction by asking questions. The implicit dramatization of this stage of the narrative (Labov’s complication) culminates in the prisoner’s apparently incredulous question, “Do you know my mother?” Gough later shows that he is alive to the comic potential of the situation and this meeting of a question with a question seems to confirm it. This dramatization of the situation (Cortazzi 1996, 64) stresses the performance nature of the account but even here the narrator (chorus?) stands back to offer comment as storyteller rather than as actor: “so I’m guessing...”, “because I had an idea...”, “I knew darn well.”. Gough is both actor and narrator in his own story.

“It just struck me that we’d got a story going...” From here on Gough feels able to summarise in third person narrative but suddenly adopts a different dramatic device by switching from past to historic present tense, still with reflective interpolations. Using the Cortazzi scheme this section seems to take us to the problem whereas with Labov it seems to stay with the complication.

“But this is the point...” clearly signals an evaluation stage, again echoing the opening sentence and prefiguring the last, though it quickly moves on into solution: “I prayed most of the night...”

“I’ve just seen him come back in.... that probably exemplifies it... bring love.” The final act as an extended coda (Labov) which is, in effect, a second story; using Cortazzi it could be both solution and evaluation. The effect, though, is to bring the narrative up to date, though most of it has been related either in direct speech or present historic, and in particular to tie the narrative into the original prompt and the opening response.

This narrative serves at least two purposes, one manifest, the other less obviously so. At the intentionalist level it stories Gough’s estimation of “the most important thing you can do as Anglican chaplain in this prison” although the Anglican strand is not explored (at this point in the interview). In more phenomenological terms it hints at the possibilities of chaplain/prisoner interaction by reconstructing a significant episode using a range of rhetorical and performing devices. Elements of the narrative could equally depict the possibilities of humour in prison chaplaincy, involvement with families or the deployment of prayer ministry or the pastoral role of the chaplain.

Each of the three narrators locates himself differently; Daniel is at the centre of his account so that it is the most immediately biographical. Roger seems to share the stage with an individual prisoner while Gough puts his prisoner centre stage. The prologue to this thesis is from another extended narrative by Gough.

This appendix and Chapter 3.2 explain my use of a specific methodology and the stages of progress from conception to printed page. This account of orientation towards institutions and individuals in the first part of the thesis is balanced by their orientation, especially in the second part, towards the researcher who is also a practitioner.

## **Appendix 11 The multiple heritage of Anglican prison chaplains.**

The origins of prison chaplaincy policy and practice are to be found both in the nineteenth century COE and in the succession of penal legislation which started in 1773, passing through major acts of Parliament in 1823, 1835 and 1877, until the currently operative 1952 Prisons Act. From 1823 each repeats the requirement for every prison to appoint a “clergyman of the Church of England” as chaplain.

Since the 1823 Act required the chaplain to be an ordained and licensed priest, it is necessary to characterise the clergy of the time, theologically and – especially – socially, in order to appreciate the several elements which comprise Anglican prison chaplains’ inheritance.

The development of the evangelical movement in strength and influence can be seen as a response to the state of the COE in the later eighteenth century. Not only did the Church lack any kind of central theology, its clergy were starkly divided between the poor, sometimes ill-educated curates at one extreme and, at the other, the university men holding multiple livings and residing in none of them (Bradley 1976, 59).

It is fair to ask how the life experience of many clergy equipped them to minister to men and women locked into the squalor which characterised the prisons of the late eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth. For more than half of Oxford and Cambridge graduates ordination was an expectation rather than an aspiration and continued so until the 1840s. (Knight 1995, 107) To question the general suitability of such men is not to deny the passionate commitment to ministry of so many.

There were, however, other reasons why ministers of the established Church might be received less than enthusiastically by prisoners. Knight (1995,1) has shown how the relationship between Church and people was conditioned by the relationship between church and government. The involvement of parish clergy in the local administration of law and government, sometimes as JPs, may have been inevitable since there would have been many communities in which they were one of the few literate members, if not the only one. Best, cited by Knight, (1995,11) suggests that the clergy knew how difficult, yet how necessary, it was to maintain law and order. This involved them in the administration of the Poor Law, the Game Law and the Corn Laws. On the other hand, the nineteenth century also saw a developing involvement of the COE in establishing schools; chaplains, too, were required to provide education classes in their prisons.

Although there were startling exceptions, they were paid mostly at about the same rate as parish curates, the impoverished substitutes for the more aspirant and wealthy clergy who chose to pursue their interests elsewhere. Many prison chaplains, then, were literally the poor relations amongst the clergy, and their ministry in its social context, variety and pastoral involvement contrasted with much of a significantly corrupt and moribund church. (Return of salaries paid to Chaplains in Prisons in England and Wales, 1833-34.) There were, of course, prison chaplains who were less than entirely conscientious.

In the first third of the nineteenth century there were positive signs of revival in the Church of England with the rise of the evangelical movement and the realisation of the need for more practical involvement of the church in society (Russell 1980,114-116). The development of clerical training marks a growing impetus to make the clergy more professional. Nevertheless, most of these advances postdate the 1823 Gaol Act. It could be said that Peel, the Home Secretary, gave prison ministry at least an implicit shape and identity before the Church itself formalised the needs for change, though there is no apparent connection between the two. Despite a re-energising of ministry in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russell notes a falling-off in parish visiting from 1830 onwards because of “the many demands on their [clergy] time and energy.” (1980, 118) This suggests that “being there” rather than pro-active mission might be seen as an Anglican inheritance.

Church of England clergy represented not only an association with the Establishment but a deep involvement with it. On the other hand, their presence in prisons can be seen as part of the increasing momentum of social reform across a broad front and reflects, even prefigures, moves to involve the Church more closely with society as it came to be perceived. This does not, however, disguise the fact that the values and theology of prison chaplaincy at its outset were consonant with the penal philosophy and practice of the time. More controvertibly, the institutionalising of the Anglican prison chaplain can be read as a narrative in which the established Church allies itself with the interests of the middle classes in attempting to cajole the lower orders into compliance.

To set against this is the increasing involvement of ritualist clergy in the slum areas of the new industrial cities (Avis 2007,52;). It is therefore misleading to speak of Anglicanism as a single, harmonious entity.

Russell summarises the paradox of the priest who,

May be regarded as standing in an authoritarian position as the guardian of morality, as a moral exemplar, and as censor, whilst at the same time he may be looked upon as pastor, friend and counsellor. (1980,127)

Insofar that it was partly a response to the social upheavals and unrest following the Industrial Revolution, the moves to reform prisons were part of the birth of modernity. One of these moves was the legislated requirement to appoint chaplains in prisons. The growth of prison chaplaincy was paralleled by a more gradual growth in prison health care.(Wiener 1990, 122; McRorie Higgins 2007, 41) Taken together, they suggest a will on the part of the Government to reform and “improve” the individual who would not conform to contemporary *mores*. It could also be argued, though, that to gather such people together in one place was to identify groups who were different, non-compliant and therefore in need of separation and reformation. Such a view accords with both a broad Marxist analysis and the more tightly focussed Foucauldian reading. The Marxist perspective would see the chaplain acting for and on behalf of the bourgeoisie as a member of that class himself. The Foucauldian perspective sees the chaplain as one of a mass, all equally anonymous, employed to gather information from which control can be more accurately targeted and exerted. (Foucault 1979,11 & 250)

The growth and reform of prisons can also, though, be seen as a political expedient following the American War of Independence and the anxieties about possible revolution at home. This is another strand of governmental response to social and international events. It reinforces the thesis that prison chaplaincy developed from predominantly secular beginnings and that it can be claimed as one of the earlier foundations of the modern state. Prisons became a means of purifying society by attempting to reshape the elements that questioned or appeared to threaten state values and practices. The established Church was mobilised to promote the values of an increasingly secular state and prison chaplains were in the vanguard of that thrust. The research data suggest that the differences between distinct strains of Anglican ecclesiology on the one hand and incorporation into the apparatus of the state, on the other, continue to be systemic features of Anglican prison chaplaincy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

