

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

THE FRESH SIGNIFICANCE OF CHAPLAINCY FOR THE MISSION
AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND:
THREE CASE STUDIES IN COMMUNITY CONTEXTS

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requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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This thesis investigates the recent growth of chaplaincy roles in community contexts. A gap in knowledge existed regarding how and why these roles were emerging at this time. The purpose of the research was to generate new insight into the significance of the growth in and practice of chaplaincy in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church in England and thus to contribute to knowledge, policy and the development of best practice.

The research adopted a case study approach. It was designed as a qualitative comparative case study of the emergence of chaplaincy roles in three contrasting geographical contexts of ministry. Data were collected by interviews, observation and documentary analysis providing rich descriptions and multiple perspectives on what was happening. A cross-case analysis identified three main themes from the data. These themes were used as the basis for proposing the significance of the phenomenon.

The findings demonstrate that chaplaincy roles are emerging as a missional response to the challenge of engaging with the whole of society presented to the church by a changing culture. It also demonstrates the current lack of conceptual clarity about what chaplaincy is and the consequent lack of chaplaincy representation within the missiological and ministerial discourses of the institutional church.

The study concludes that chaplaincy is of central significance to the mission and ministry of the church given that chaplains are located in the social structures of society alongside people whom the churches find it increasingly difficult to encounter. It offers the proposition for others to test, that if chaplaincy is to have a voice in church discourses and if sustainable best practice is to be developed, the identity and integrity of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry need to be described. The new knowledge generated by the research provides a basis for such a description, for the development of the researcher's practice and for making a contribution to church policy and practice.

Key words: chaplaincy, community, mission, ministry

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PART ONE

THE GENESIS OF THE RESEARCH

Prologue

'In my beginning is my end.' (Eliot 1969a, p. 177)

My formal involvement with chaplaincy began in 1985 when I spent the summer working with the chaplaincy team at Charing Cross Hospital prior to entering training for ordination in the Church of England. From the beginning of the ministerial selection process I had a strong sense that my calling was to be alongside people, paying faithful attention to and engaging with their lived experience whether or not they had a relationship with a particular faith community. Chaplaincy seemed to be the form of ministry that would enable me to live that calling. In my understanding at the time, if God was the God of the whole Creation and if the church existed to serve God's purposes in the world, then representatives of the church needed to be out in the world, available to meet people where they were, prepared to listen to their lives and able to respond in ways that spoke of God's involvement with and love for all people. This is what made sense to me theologically, ecclesiologically and vocationally. The chaplaincy experience that summer was confirmatory of that sense of calling and in the autumn I began theological training. At the end of my ministerial training, after experience of different forms of chaplaincy and with the support of the theological college, I applied for an Assistant Chaplain post at what were then the Central Manchester hospitals and was appointed in 1989.

I subsequently learned how difficult it had been to make the appointment. The hospital representatives on the interview panel and the Senior Chaplain wanted to appoint me as the best person for the job, the church representative argued against the appointment on the grounds that I needed to have parish experience first. The Senior Chaplain had to argue hard for the appointment. Thus at the inception of my chaplaincy career I encountered a tension between chaplaincy and the institutional church, the significance of which still resonates throughout chaplaincy practice and

through this research. In my own case, the tension was held through an arrangement by which for my first year I served one half day a week and some Sundays as honorary curate in an inner city parish next to the hospital. I subsequently spent five creative and fruitful years as a chaplain in Manchester, acquiring necessary skills and knowledge, learning what it meant to be a chaplain and laying the foundations for future work.

This personal experience of feeling called to work as a chaplain in a particular secular context rather than as a parish priest within church structures has been seminal in my life:

‘From the start, I had a deeply held conviction of the importance of chaplaincy not only to the health and wellbeing of the individuals and communities it served but also to the institutional church as a way of enabling it to live out its vocation to serve the mission of God in the world. My involvement with chaplaincy during the past quarter century has done nothing to diminish this conviction, a conviction that inspires and animates my research’ (Slater 2011c, p.1).

Since 1989 I have been involved with chaplaincy as a practitioner, an educator, a consultant, and a contributor to policy development in healthcare contexts. When I started work at Ripon College Cuddesdon, my role changed from being a chaplain to facilitating the development of chaplaincy.

I begin with this vignette of my own experience for two reasons. Firstly, it encapsulates some of the central issues of chaplaincy that are fundamental in this research. These include the nature and purpose of chaplaincy as a form of ministry, its relationship with the institutional church and its significance within the mission of the church in the service of God’s mission in the world. Secondly, it makes transparent the self-reflexive dimension of the interpretive context of this qualitative case study inquiry. Throughout the research process I have been constantly aware that the issues that have been revealed have paralleled the issues lived and reflected on in my own experience over many years. In the context of this research, my own

experience and practice of chaplaincy are valued as sources of insight and interpretation that resonate with the experience and practice that I have encountered in the research case studies. The research process itself therefore embodies a central dynamic of the case study approach: 'The case study thus offers you an example from which your experience, your phronesis, enables you to gather insights or understand a problem' (Thomas 2011, p.215). Any contributions that this research makes to the understandings and practice of chaplaincy are therefore the fruit of bringing a detailed analysis of empirical data into critical dialogue with theoretical perspectives from theology and other related disciplines and with my own understandings and experience of chaplaincy. The preliminary literature review (Slater, 2011a) enabled me to bring my initial questions into dialogue with relevant thinking from theology and so to reframe the main research question so that it was theological in purpose. This theological understanding then informed the subsequent research process. The intention was that this dialogic approach would create a 'potentially *transformative resonance*' (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p.47).

Having placed the research in the context of my own phronesis I will now locate its genesis within my current work context and describe the scope of the project.

Chapter One

The contextual background of the research

Introduction

In 2008 I began work as Research Officer at the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology (OxCEPT) with the remit to develop the chaplaincy strand of the work. My practice involves doing research and finding ways to support the development of effective chaplaincy practice. This research was initially undertaken in order to inform the creation of ways to support and reflect on chaplaincy practice. OxCEPT works ecumenically but is based at Ripon College Cuddesdon, an Anglican theological college that trains people for ministry in the Church of England. Initial research amongst networks and colleagues involved with chaplaincy pointed to a marked growth in the development of chaplaincy roles in community contexts such as care homes, retail centres and the police. Not only has there been 'a perceived but unquantified growth in the demand for chaplaincy services from secular organisations' but there has also been 'a renewed interest in chaplaincy from different church denominations' (Slater 2011a, p.1). For example, both the Methodist and Baptist churches have produced research reports into chaplaincy (Bowers, 2005; Culver, 2009) and the trend towards the development of chaplaincy posts is reflected in the increasing number and variety that are advertised in the church press (Ballard, 2009).

The identification of this trend prompted me to ask why this was happening and what its significance might be for the mission and ministry of the church today. Although there are two texts which describe and reflect upon chaplaincy practice in different contexts (Legood, 1999; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011a), I could find no research or literature which addressed how chaplaincy roles were emerging in community contexts and what the significance of this trend might be. It was clear that empirical research was needed. In 2009, in order to find the appropriate focus for such research, I did an indicative scoping study of Christian chaplaincy in community contexts. This identified the growth in chaplaincy roles as an emerging issue ready to be researched (Slater, 2009). A review of relevant literature and

theoretical perspectives (Slater, 2011a), described in this chapter, enabled me to reframe my question within a conceptual framework that gave it theological purpose and led to the articulation of the central research question:

What is the significance of the recent development of chaplaincy practice in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church in England?

As part of a professional doctorate, this thesis is the final part of a portfolio of papers that have already been examined and passed. Paper 1 (Appendix B) was the review of literature, Paper 2 (Appendix C) the initial presentation of Case Study One (CS1) and Paper 3 (Appendix D) the research proposal. These papers are cited where relevant within the text.

The purpose of the research was to generate new insight into the significance of the growth in and practice of chaplaincy for the mission and ministry of the church in order to contribute to knowledge, policy and practice. The research focus therefore needed to be on how and why chaplaincy roles are emerging, requiring an approach that would enable me to capture processes and relationships as well as to provide descriptions. To achieve this aim, I decided to adopt the case study approach in order to meet the two main difficulties encountered in the study of this type of chaplaincy: 'The diversity of context and models of chaplaincy practice mean that it is hard to find a focus of enquiry: on what basis might one select participants when every chaplaincy looks different according to context?' and 'The related temptation ... to gather accounts of diverse practice without taking the necessary step of interpretive analysis in order to inform both theory and future practice' (Slater, 2011c). Because I wanted to understand the significance of the phenomenon for the mission and ministry of the church, I also decided to investigate the practice of Christian chaplains whose roles had emerged in ministerial contexts rather than particular models of chaplaincy such as multi-faith or generic. I decided to limit the study to the church in England as this is the primary context of my practice. These

parameters provided a feasible focus for research that would generate data directly relevant to the research question.

The research was therefore designed as a comparative case study of the emergence of chaplaincy roles in three different geographical contexts for ministry: Case Study One (CS1), a rural multi-parish benefice; Case Study Two (CS2), a town centre team ministry; and Case Study Three (CS3), a market town ecumenical project. Situated within the constructivist - interpretive paradigm of qualitative research and rooted in a critical realist epistemology (Swinton 2001, p.98), the case study approach enabled me to elicit thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of chaplaincy practice which would then be available for analysis and interpretation (Slater, 2011c). These approaches are described and justified in Part 2 providing the research context for the presentation of the case studies in Part 3.

During a nine month period in 2011, rich data were collected using mixed methods of documentary analysis, informal observation and in depth semi-structured interviews. The intention was that the variety of methods would provide multiple perspectives with which to capture the complexity of the contexts and ensure credibility (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p.122). Interviews were recorded, transcribed and sent to participants for checking and comment before being analysed using NVivo 9 software. Because there is no precedent for research in this area and therefore no prior data or propositions to test, transcripts were initially free coded. Codes were gathered into parent nodes and a cross-case analysis of parent nodes was then made. Three main themes were identified through the analysis: the role of theologies of mission in the emergence of chaplaincy roles; the identity and integrity of chaplaincy; and the relationship between chaplaincy and parish-based ministry. The case study stories presented in Part 3 were written following this analysis and the main themes provide the basis for the interpretation and discussion in Part 4. This leads into Part 5 which presents propositions about the significance of the research for practice and policy based on the research evidence. This includes a discussion of the

significance of the research for the development of my own skills, knowledge and practice.

The research makes a contribution to professional practice knowledge in an area where there is no prior empirical research. The themes generated by the analysis provide the basis for the articulation of a narrative of chaplaincy which is currently absent from the church's institutional narratives of mission and ministry. By delineating the integrity of chaplaincy and locating it within the church's ecology of mission, the research is well positioned to make a contribution to policy in relation to current thinking about mission and ministry in the church in England and in particular to thinking about the strategic resourcing of this genre of ministry. It is also envisaged that the work will contribute to the creation of a consultancy model for the development of chaplaincy roles and to the provision of pastoral supervision and professional development for chaplains through OxCEPT. In this way, the research fulfils the central requirement of the Anglia Ruskin Professional Doctorate of 'making a difference' to practice (Anglia Ruskin University, 2010).

Involvement in the research process has already made a difference to my own practice by contributing to the growth of my research knowledge and skills as well as to my understanding of chaplaincy in community contexts. It has provided me with a research base from which I can develop my practice with its remit to enable reflection on and effective practice of chaplaincy. I reflect on this developmental journey further at the end of Chapter Ten. Finally, an Epilogue circles back to the Prologue with its vignette of my personal experience of the lacuna in understanding between chaplaincy and the institutional church. It signals how the cultural, social and ecclesial changes in the intervening years have compelled the institution to reconsider its relationship with chaplaincy and the significance of this form of ministry as it 're-imagines'¹ mission and ministry in the 21st Century.

¹ The Church of England is in process of re-thinking what its calling to serve God's mission to the whole of society in the 21st Century implies for the structures of ministry. A discussion document called *Instruments of Grace and Love: Re-imagining Ministry in the Church of England* has been discussed by the General Synod House of Bishops.

The contextual background of the research

The recent growth in chaplaincy roles in community contexts is an unresearched area. Several texts describe specific chaplaincy contexts (Legood, 1999; Norman, 2004; Torry, 2010; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011a), but as far as I am aware, the growth in the diversity and number of chaplaincy roles has not been identified as a phenomenon to which attention needs to be paid.

Brown (2011) refers to this situation in the editorial of a recent edition of *Crucible: The Christian Journal of Social Ethics*, devoted to chaplaincy. He notes that the literature of chaplaincy has usually been 'structured around a taxonomy of institutions' with the result that considerations of it 'as a mode of ministry and mission – with shared foundations in theology and missiology and common practical challenges – have tended to be neglected' (2011, p.6). He goes on to affirm the conclusion of a consultation on chaplaincy, held at St. George's Windsor in 2010, which brought together people responsible for chaplaincy in many contexts, that 'chaplaincy is less about ministry to discrete structures than about the churches' engagement with society and the public sphere in all its fullness' (2011, p.6). In the light of this perception, Brown's editorial stance was to commission articles that took a thematic approach to addressing issues relating to chaplaincy rather than articles about chaplaincy in different contexts. The themes addressed are: the mission of the church (Brown, 2011); representation in the public square (Todd, 2011); entrepreneurship (Hayler, 2011); the multi-faith context (Davies, 2011); the relationship with the parish (Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011b). This editorial intention signals a recognition by the institutional church of its current lack of knowledge and understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of chaplaincy and the need for research and coherent thinking about it in relation to its mission and ministry. The articles are presented as making an important contribution towards the development of a rationale for chaplaincy which is cogent both in the churches and in the contexts within which chaplains work. At present, the voice of chaplaincy in the missiological and ministerial discourse of the church is rarely heard and, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven, the potential strategic importance for the

mission of the church of the location of chaplaincy at the interface between church and society has hitherto gone largely unremarked.

In view of chaplaincy's lack of representation in the literature on mission and ministry, this chapter will delineate the main parameters of the contextual background relevant to the discussion of chaplaincy in order to locate it within a broader theological and cultural frame of reference. I will begin by acknowledging the commonly perceived dislocation of chaplaincy from the central concerns of the institutional church before locating the discussion within the critical dialogic approach of practical theology. Within this I will highlight some of the main areas of theological and social engagement that are relevant to the study and understanding of contemporary chaplaincy. This will provide an initial overview of the main theoretical perspectives with which this study is in dialogue providing the contextual background that informs the subsequent discussion. A full account of the literature relevant to the research is found at Appendix B.

A narrative of dislocation? Chaplaincy and the institutional church

A consistent theme that emerged from my scoping study of chaplaincy in community contexts (Slater, 2009) was that many chaplains did not feel that the church valued, validated or understood their work in the same way that it did parish or congregational ministry. Woodward's experience echoes this (Woodward 1999, p.165) whilst in his work on Hospital Chaplaincy, Swift (2009, p.173) refers to, 'the silent exile of the chaplains from the central preoccupations of the Church.' The complex reasons for this perceived dislocation will be explicated through this study but it is important here to note that there is wide perception that there *is* a dislocation between the theology and concerns of the church and those of chaplains who work within the social structures of society. This has been perpetuated by the fact that the recent rapid growth in innovative chaplaincy-type roles has far outstripped any theological reflection on practice. As a consequence there is a lack of a cogent theological rationale for chaplaincy that can be represented to and heard by the church and which can inform best practice. Both Ballard (2009) and Brown (2011) recognise the need for this work to be done if chaplaincy

is to find a voice commensurate with its potential significance for the mission and ministry of the church.

Locating chaplaincy as a field of study: chaplaincy and Practical Theology

In order to understand this sense of dislocation, it is necessary to understand the relationship of chaplaincy with the contemporary cultural and ecclesial context. The growth in chaplaincy at the time of a declining trend in congregational numbers, as explored in research such as that of Heelas and Woodhead (2005), raises the question of what this implies about the relationship of both the church and chaplaincy with their social and cultural context. Ballard (2009) suggests that the growth in chaplaincy represents one way in which the church is adapting to the dispersed and fluid nature of contemporary life. Geographical locatedness declines in significance as people move constantly between different roles and spheres of activity and the chaplaincy model is seen as an attempt, 'to express the relevance of the gospel to every facet of life, each of which demands its particular response' (2009, p.19). This casts chaplaincy as an aspect of the re-enculturation of the gospel in contemporary society, an ecclesial adaptation to the cultural context (Slater 2011a, p.5).

Ballard helpfully locates chaplaincy in a social context rather than simply detailing functions. Here, the key characteristic of chaplaincy is that its primary context is the 'world' rather than the 'church' and what defines chaplains is that, whilst they have links with the church, they are embedded in social structures which shape the job. In contrast, parochial ministers reach out to the community from within the structures and culture of the church. Ballard (2009, p.5) characterises chaplains as public theologians doing practical theology, working alongside people in everyday life in order to address individual and social concerns. The task is 'to articulate theological insight, perspective and challenge in a way that is accessible to those outside the faith community.' This recognition of the missional importance of the location of chaplains in the public square is also recognised by Morisy

(2004) in relation to Community Ministry and by Brown (2011) and Todd (2011).

Given the location of chaplains in the structures of society at the interface between the church and contemporary culture, the study of chaplaincy needs to be located within Practical Theology which is, according to Woodward and Pattison (2000, p.xiii), 'a prime place where contemporary experience and the resources of the religious tradition meet in critical dialogue that is mutually and practically transforming.' Swinton and Mowat (2006) define Practical Theology as 'critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world with a view to ensuring faithful participation in the continuing mission of the triune God.' They contend that one of the main critical tasks of Practical Theology is, 'to recognize distorted practice and to call the Church back to the theological significance of its practices' (2006, p.24). However, given the complexity of the contemporary cultural context, practical theologians recognise that in order to accomplish this task, they need to be in dialogue with disciplines outside theology if they are to describe and understand practice as fully as possible (Percy, 2005; Cameron et al., 2012). The focus is on praxis² and experience as potentially revelatory of theological insight (Tracy, 1981) accounting human experience as a locus of revelation. Practical Theology is action oriented with an ultimate aim that lies 'beyond disciplinary concerns in the pursuit of an embodied Christian faith' (Miller-McLemore 2011, p.5).

Percy's work explores the relationship between Christianity and contemporary culture and how theology can make a contribution to public life. It therefore offers a practical theological approach which helps to illuminate the dialogic relationship between chaplaincy, its context, the faith tradition and contemporary culture which is the hybrid and sophisticated context in response to which chaplaincy is shaped (Percy, 2005; Percy, 2006; Percy, 2010; Percy, 2012). The study of chaplaincy is at home in the critical dialogic approach of practical theology because both are concerned

² Praxis is here understood as practice informed by and informing theoretical reflection.

with, 'how theological activity can inform and be informed by practical action in the interests of making an appropriate, effective Christian response in the modern world' (Woodward and Pattison 2000, p.2).

Locating chaplaincy in the cultural and ecclesial context

The location of chaplaincy praxis at the nexus of mutual interplay between several contexts, all of which have their own culture, is represented in Figure 1.1 below.

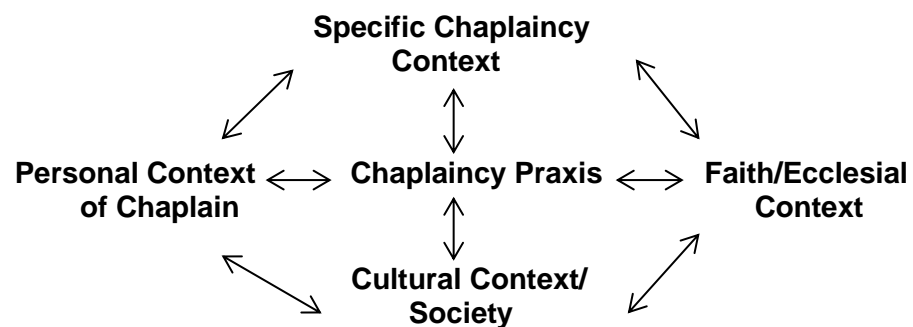


Figure 1.1: The dialogic nature of chaplaincy

This shows the dialogic nature of chaplaincy with the main contexts of mutual influence and engagement that constitute the contextual background to understanding the growth of chaplaincy as a cultural and ecclesial phenomenon.

As Percy (2005, p.2) notes, the meanings of the term 'culture' vary according to context and the scope of 'cultural studies' is broad. The anthropologist Geertz (Geertz 1973, p.5) states his belief, 'that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.' He takes culture to be those webs. Gorringer (Gorringer 2004, p.3), drawing on this understanding, defines culture as, 'what we make of the world, materially, intellectually and spiritually.' Percy defines culture in a practical theological context as, 'the study of what is overlaid, built or imposed on the natural environment', concerned with 'communication, power relations, values, aesthetics and meaning.' As he points out (Percy 2005, p.2), this implies that churches and other religious institutions are themselves 'cultures' as is

theology itself. From an organisational perspective, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) present a model of culture as many-layered including both material culture and the implicit values and norms in a society. They define it as 'a shared system of meanings. It dictates what we pay attention to, how we act, and what we value' (2012, p.17). I espouse an understanding of culture that draws on these definitions and use the term to refer to the way of life, customs, shared meanings, values and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time.

One of the main areas relevant to this study is the relationship of the church with the cultural context of society. The perennial task for the church is to discern how to fulfil its mission in and to the world. In response to the marked demographic, social and cultural changes that have taken place in the past twenty years creating a plural, fluid and mobile global society, the church has sought to reconfigure itself in an attempt to maintain a place in public discourse and to find ways of connecting with people who are 'closed to institutional belonging but open to "God" and the transcendent' (Slater, 2011a).

As long ago as 1994, in *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, Davie drew attention to the disjunction between practice and belief as a characteristic of post-war religious life in Britain. This posed the prescient question, 'If churchgoing in its conventional sense is diminishing, through which institutional mechanisms can those concerned about the religious factor in contemporary society work outside of the church itself?' (1994, p.107). A decade later, the Church of England report *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* (The Archbishops' Council, 2004) recognised the need for the church to adapt to its context in dialogue with the prevailing culture in order to remain faithful to its mission. This report has had a pervasive impact on practice and on subsequent discourse about mission. Although the report was criticised for being ecclesologically conservative, focusing on evangelisation rather than mission (Hull, 2006), nevertheless it signals an awareness of the importance for mission of the church's relationship with the

prevailing culture. The report represents an initial engagement in a process of discernment and adaptation that has led to the idea of a 'mixed economy' of different types of ministry (Bayes and Jordan, 2010) including the movement of 'emerging church', Fresh Expressions³ and Pioneer Ministry (Goodhew et al., 2012). All of these initiatives represent an attempt to re-enculturate the gospel and to renegotiate the relationship between the institutional church and society. However, neither the report nor subsequent discussions about ministry mention chaplaincy. This seems to be a startling and somewhat puzzling omission given the extent and social reach of chaplaincy.

Over the past twenty years the debate about mission and ministry in the Church of England has intensified. The debate has been polarised between those who stress the importance of place and the parish (Percy, 2008; Davison and Milbank, 2010) and those who stress the importance of culture such as those involved with Fresh Expressions (Goodhew et al., 2012). Chaplaincy has been lost within this debate. The emergence of chaplaincy roles in community contexts signals a response to the challenge of cultural change that recognises the complexity of the contemporary cultural context and the need to move beyond the polarities of the debate between place and culture in order to make a nuanced response to context. It is the capacity of chaplaincy to respond to and flourish in diverse contexts, as evidenced in the ensuing case studies, which gives it fresh contemporary significance because it provides missional opportunities that are not easily available to parish clergy.

Given the contemporary ecclesiological imperative to engage with the whole of society, it is not surprising that there has been a parallel resurgence in interest in chaplaincy as a genre of ministry. Steddon (2010, pp.11-12) posits two theological approaches to engagement with culture, each of which

³ Fresh Expressions here refers to the joint initiative of the Church of England and the Methodist Church which supports and resources the development of new ways of being Church alongside traditional churches in parishes and circuits. The Fresh Expressions website can be accessed at: www.freshexpressions.org.uk.

reflects certain assumptions about the nature of mission. 'Host' theology engages in order to say, 'Come to our place and do as we do' whilst 'guest' theology asks, 'Please may I come to your place and be part of what you do?' Chaplaincy is located within the latter and understood as the church dispersed rather than gathered. He notes the importance of perspective when locating chaplaincy; whilst it may be seen as marginal or liminal by the mainstream church:

'Liminality cuts both ways. If the church by and large is on the edge of society , then what looks to be 'on the edge' as far as church is concerned, may be plumb centre from where civil society stands' (Steddon 2010, p.26).

Steddon's comment typifies what Percy (2006, p.21) identifies as the revisionist approach to ecclesiological inquiry which draws on disciplines such as sociology, practical theology and ethnography rather than generating ideal, traditional accounts of ministry following a blueprint of the church. This approach recognises the need for genuine dialogue between the church and its social and cultural context. No longer able to engage from a position of inherited privilege, listening and conversation necessarily become major modes of theological and ecclesial engagement, modes that are characteristic of chaplaincy in its engagement with people's lived experience. As Percy (2005) notes, in today's cultural context, theology and ministry depend substantially on the quality of their social, intellectual and cultural engagement for their value as public discourse. Todd (2011) goes so far as to suggest that given that chaplaincy embraces a practical and dialogical mode of engagement with society which the church urgently needs to adopt, it may in fact be indicative of the future shape of the church.

One of the most significant currents relevant to chaplaincy in contemporary culture has been the rise to prominence of 'spirituality' as a category of human experience and locus of academic interest separated from religion. In *Contemporary Spirituality*, Lesniak (2005) addresses the well documented rise in interest in spirituality and the decline in interest in institutional religion

in recent decades. She notes that any spirituality is embedded in culture and argues that 'spirituality' is conducive to the contemporary temperament because by attending to, 'lived human experience, spirituality is viewed as a more inclusive, tolerant and flexible canopy [than religion or systematic theology] under which to pursue the mysteries of the human spirit and the sacred' (2005, p.8). She notes that spiritual seekers have sought alternative visions of authenticity and meaning, espousing contemplative resources and practices from different faith traditions which enable them to envision and practice an authentic spirituality without church affiliation. Schneiders (1994; 1998; 2003; 2005) has made a major contribution to engaging with this cultural phenomenon and to establishing the study of spirituality as a human experience and as an academic discipline whilst Pattison (2007) has addressed the relationship between the specifically Christian spiritual tradition and the prevalent discourse of 'generic spirituality' in healthcare contexts.

Pattison advocates the need for chaplains to articulate the distinctiveness of the Christian spiritual tradition over against the prevailing cultural context of healthcare in relation to spirituality whilst Corkery's dialogic approach to spirituality and culture suggests a model that respects both the plurality of spiritualities in contemporary culture and Christian specificity. For Corkery (2005), the underlying assumption is that however expressed, God is already present in the yearnings of the human spirit. Christian spirituality needs to be willing not only to challenge prevailing discourse but also to be kenotic, 'willing to make its home in those elements of the culture that can house Christian faith today' (Slater 2011a, p.21). Like practising chaplains, writers such as Pattison and Corkery are compelled to wrestle with the question of the relationship between Christian spirituality and the prevailing culture. This suggests that how the churches understand and engage with the cultural turn from religion to spirituality is of central importance both for chaplaincy and for the mission and ministry of the wider church.

The rise of spirituality has occasioned a great deal of cultural and religious analysis. Heelas (2002) first presented the cultural theory that a 'spiritual

revolution' is taking place in that more people now favour the language of 'life-spirituality' based on personal experience than that of traditional religion. This was tested empirically in research undertaken with Woodhead (2005) which found that traditional forms of religious association were being influenced by and giving way to new forms of spirituality. The research also found that a key component of types of churches and spiritualities that are thriving is an engagement with personal experience. The authors conclude that this shift reflects a wider social dynamic; the subjectivisation of culture within which sensitivity to inner life and wellbeing has become more important than conformity to external obligations or dogma. Carette and King (2005) contend that spirituality, cut loose from its roots in religious traditions, has been colonised by the capitalist agenda and has taken over the public space previously inhabited by religion. They suggest that the ethical and social dimensions that spirituality traditionally draws on have been lost and that it now occupies a 'privatised and conformist' space in society.

Tacey (2004) complements this socio-economic reading of the place of spirituality in contemporary culture with an analysis of the phenomenon from the perspective of depth psychology. Tacey's analysis listens to religious traditions as well as to the various discourses of spirituality. He sees the contemporary engagement with spirituality as symptomatic of deeper human concerns; the longing for sacredness and spiritual meaning. He also recognises that in order to thrive in the contemporary context, religious traditions need to take account of personal experience and to account it as a source of revelation. He suggests that the churches need to focus on revealing the presence of God in the everyday and ordinary by 'offering guidance, support and spiritual discernment in the scattered community' (2004, p.197).

Tacey's model of engagement with spirituality seeks to discern and understand the deeper movements in society that it represents by engaging in genuine dialogue on the theological presupposition that God may be at work in this upsurge of interest in the spiritual; rather than dismissing much of it as superficial or incoherent, the church may have something to learn

from it (Slater, 2011a). Chaplaincy practice exists in dialogue with and in the space between the discourse of the faith tradition and that of contemporary spiritual experience. The question of how the tradition engages with and understands contemporary spirituality is therefore one of its core concerns and an important aspect of the contextual background to this study as part of the broader discourse of mission.

Locating chaplaincy in relation to understandings of mission

The changes in understandings of mission that have taken place over the last twenty years are another crucial dimension of the contextual background to this study. As Heywood (2011, p.50) notes, rather than mission being understood as something that particular churches do, such as planting churches or sending missionaries overseas, it is increasingly understood as something that God does in the whole of Creation that arises out of God's intrinsic nature. This activity, known as the *missio Dei*, speaks of 'the overflowing of God's being and nature into God's purposeful activity in the world' (Avis 2005, p.5). Bosch's foundational work, *Transforming Mission* (1992), set the agenda for the development of understandings of mission that have subsequently informed Anglican thinking. It charts the shift in thinking and develops a Protestant theology of mission grounded in the concept of the *missio Dei* and described as, 'the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world' (1992, p.519). The presupposition of this understanding of mission is that God is always and everywhere at work in the world; the church is God's chosen partner and therefore the mission of the church is to serve God's mission in the world.

The *SCM Study Guide to Christian Mission* (Spencer, 2007) can be seen as an Anglican response to the movement of missional thinking outlined above. In this guide, Spencer (2007) explores the concept of the *missio Dei* in Western theology to present mission as grounded in the participative relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that is the Trinitarian life of God. Mission is understood as the outpouring of this relational life into the world, inviting and drawing others to share in its life-giving exchange. This means that the heart of mission is relational because God is relational and therefore,

if mission is grounded in participative relationship, it cannot be one-way but is always marked by genuine dialogue and mutual exchange. These understandings of mission rest on certain underlying theological emphases: the importance of the Kingdom of God understood as God's reign over and involvement with the whole of Creation; the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in Creation; and a consequent understanding of church as called into existence for the sake of the whole of Creation.

Spencer presents a paradigm of mission that addresses mission in the contemporary context characterised as 'finding hope in local communities'. This paradigm is particularly relevant to this study which investigates the church's response to the contemporary changing culture focusing on the nature of ecclesial involvement in community contexts. Referring to Bonhoeffer and to Donovan's cross-cultural missionary strategy in *Christianity Rediscovered* (Donovan, 1978), Spencer (2007, p.175) endorses the common theme he finds in their work of, 'the Church laying aside its power and wealth and becoming vulnerable to the local community, listening before witnessing, changing and being changed by the encounter.'

This paradigm suggests that in a plural, multi-faith context, it is in the willingness to engage in genuine dialogue that opportunities for authentic witness occur. In the context of local communities, it is in the offering of service and the giving and receiving of hospitality and care that 'genuine dialogue and witness may take place' (2007, p.180). Listening before witnessing, humility, mutuality, encounter, dialogue and depth of discipleship are thus identified as important components of mission in the contemporary context. A similar perception led Bosch (1992, p.375) to suggest that we need to speak of the church 'with' and alongside others rather than 'for' others as part of God's identification with the world in the sending of the Son.

This contemporary emphasis on relationality being at the heart of mission echoes Taylor's contemplative exposition of mission in *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (Taylor, 1984). This issued a call to the churches to pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the

world, in the 'extraordinary ordinariness' of people's daily lives (Slater, 2011a). By suggesting that if mission is understood as participation in the life of God in the world, Taylor (1984, p.227) then observed that 'the heart of mission is communion with God in the midst of the world's life.' The fundamental missionary activity is therefore to live in prayer such that the whole of our lives bear witness to our faith. Taylor's belief that our relationship with our neighbour mirrors our relationship with God reflects the thinking of the Jewish philosopher and theologian Martin Buber. In *I and Thou* Buber (1958, p.132) states that, 'The relation with man is the real simile of the relation with God.' In Buber's work, the life of the Spirit is manifested between persons who enter into relationship with their whole being; relationality is therefore fundamental to living the life of the Spirit. This suggests a sacramental understanding of the world as the arena of God's activity and of genuine relationships as holding the potential to be a place of revelation and transformation. This stream of thought, harnessed by Taylor, provides further theological underpinning of the concept of the *missio Dei*. It points to the significance of the relational dimension of mission that is pertinent to the study of chaplaincy given that it is characteristically located within social structures and has a focus on pastoral care. It suggests that, 'it is the quality of and approach to relationships that holds the potential to bear witness to faith and to be revelatory of God's presence at the heart of Creation' (Slater 2011a, p.16).

Chaplaincy, pastoral care and the mission of the church

The discussion of the relational dimension of mission as part of the contextual background to the discussion of chaplaincy remains incomplete without consideration of pastoral care. From the early church to the present day, there have been different understandings of and emphases in pastoral care in relation to the varied historical, religious, social and cultural contexts in which it is exercised. Hunter (2005) acknowledges that in the Twentieth Century, valuable insights from the psychological sciences, particularly the work of Carl Rogers and Person Centred Therapy, have illuminated pastoral care but notes a growing concern from pastoral theologians to reclaim its place in the 'cure of souls' tradition and to understand its tasks as inherently

theological (Slater, 2011a). In this understanding, pastoral care pays attention to the contemporary context whilst maintaining its theological roots.

Pattison's work relating to pastoral care stands within this concern to reclaim its Christian theological character. Building on the work of previous writers (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1975; Clinebell, 1984), he roots it in the Christian tradition by defining it as, 'that activity, undertaken especially by representative Christian persons, directed towards the elimination and relief of sin and sorrow and the presentation of all people perfect in Christ to God' (Pattison 1988, p.13). Clebsch and Jaekle see its core forms as healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling to which Pattison adds 'nurturing' taken from Clinebell's *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling* (1984). He advocates that it should guard against individualism and any Christian isolationism that is concerned only with the community of faith. Influenced by Liberation theological models, he maintains that pastoral care is for the world and that its aim is the transformation of social ills and injustice as well as individual suffering. He echoes Marx in insisting that it is about changing the world, but he also acknowledges the important emphasis on quality of *being* as well as *doing* within the tradition and the contributions made by Wright (1980) and Campbell (1981) in this respect. Within this emphasis, the vision and quality of personhood of the pastor is seen as central to human encounter and to the efficacy of pastoral care.

Pattison's work, along with a historical perspective that recognises the changing understandings and practices of pastoral care, reminds us that pastoral care is never value free. Graham (1993) develops this perception from a Feminist and Liberation theological perspective in *The Sexual Politics of Pastoral Care* in which she explicates the social and power relations in play within helping relationships. In this Feminist model, pastoral relationships are characterised as reflecting the divine nature and disclosing God. Graham asserts that, 'Christian pastoral practice has the potential to reveal a God who is startlingly present in human encounter' (1993, p.220). Here the emphasis is on mutuality, vulnerability, relationality, interconnectedness and the importance of understanding context. These

qualities resonate on a wider social level with Percy's approach to cultural engagement and to the relational dimension of mission discussed above. Lyall (2001) seeks to establish the integrity of pastoral care in a plural context as deriving from the pastor being rooted in the Christian narrative. He writes from the Reformed tradition and although he has a different emphasis, he maintains like Pattison, that it is this rootedness in the tradition that confers pastoral identity and integrity and enables the pastor to work on and across boundaries between the church and world, faith and culture. However, like Graham, he maintains that God's presence is revealed through the quality of pastoral relationship which points 'gracefully beyond itself to the available God' (2001, p.162).

In *Is Pastoral Care Dead in a Mission-led Church?* Pattison (2008) suggests that a culturally beleaguered contemporary church has turned inward to focus on its own faith community and in so doing it has marginalised and attenuated the pastoral vision that was 'at the cutting edge of practical theology and Christian ministry' twenty years previously. This was a vision that was, 'informed by a determination to encounter and nurture the divine wherever it was found in human individuals and communities'. He sees this vision as having been 'returned to the personal, the private, the passive, the introverted, and the individually pathological' (2008, p.8). This article may be polemical in tone but it does underline Pattison's important plea for pastoral care to be inclusive and therefore central to God's mission in the world providing, 'a spacious room for those who want to address the needs of the people and world they inhabit in the light of God's mission to humanity.' In making this plea, Pattison locates pastoral care at the cutting edge of mission declaring, 'You can't have too much humanity in mission – that is the message of the Incarnation' (2008, p.9). This points to an understanding of pastoral care that is contextually aware, inclusive and with the potential to be the locus of transformative missional encounter in the service of God's mission in the world. It is an understanding that is directly relevant to chaplaincy.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have identified the recent growth in chaplaincy roles in community contexts as a distinct phenomenon that is not represented in the missiological or ministerial literature. The literature that does exist (Legood, 1999; Torry, 2010; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011a) focuses on specific contexts rather than on a broader analysis of the nature of chaplaincy as a frontier ministry engaged with people's lived experience and located in social rather than ecclesial structures (Ballard, 2009). There is also a lack of research that addresses chaplaincy as a genre of ministry within the mission of the church (Brown, 2011). This absence of the voice of chaplaincy within the discourse of the church (Swift, 2009) pointed to the dislocation of chaplaincy from the central concerns of the institutional church and the need to understand its location in relation to both society and the church as the contextual background to the research.

Figure 1.1 represented the culturally engaged, dialogic nature of chaplaincy and its location as praxis in relation to the main relevant contextual perspectives. Its situatedness establishes the dialogic nature of chaplaincy and the appropriateness of its location as a field of study within the critical-dialogic approach of Practical Theology. The chapter considers some of the main contextual perspectives with which the study of chaplaincy needs to be in dialogue, particularly the contemporary cultural and ecclesial contexts with specific reference to the turn to 'spirituality' and understandings of mission. The exploration of the contemporary cultural context indicates the contours of a subjective, fragmented, fluid and plural social reality which demands an appropriate ecclesial response if the church is to remain engaged with people's daily lives and a respected participant in conversations in the public square. This exploration of the main theoretical perspectives with which chaplaincy is in critical dialogue suggests that the growth in chaplaincy roles in community contexts represents a pre-reflective ecclesial adaptation and response to the contemporary plural context.

None of the available literature articulates a rationale for chaplaincy as part of the mission and ministry of the church. The chapter's exploration of

contemporary understandings of mission, with particular reference to the *missio Dei*, suggests that given its social location and the dialogic nature of its engagement with civil society, chaplaincy could be understood as being at the cutting edge of mission, 'a prime locus of the church's participation in the Mission of God in the world for the building up of the Kingdom and the flourishing of all God's people' (Slater 2011a, p.25). However, suggestive as this exploration of contextual perspectives may be, there is an absence of research into practice. In Part Two I will go on to discuss how the research reported in this thesis was designed to address this situation by providing evidence of how chaplaincy roles developed in particular community contexts and the relationship in practice of chaplaincy development and theologies of mission as the basis of an analysis of the significance of this phenomenon for the mission and ministry of the church.

PART TWO

FINDING WAYS AND MEANS TO UNDERTAKE THE RESEARCH

Chapter Two

Research methodology and design

‘the steady but always changing commitment of all qualitative researchers...to study human experience from the ground up’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p.1063).

This chapter begins by locating the study within qualitative research before discussing the methodological, epistemological and ethical assumptions that underpin the research. It discusses the choice of case study as the approach and the use of the approach in the design and execution of the study.

In Part One I have described the genesis of the research project. I began with a general perception, based in personal and professional experience, that the recent growth in chaplaincy-type roles might be significant for the mission of the church. In order to explore this further, in 2009 I undertook an indicative scoping study of a cross-section of chaplains in community contexts and several national Chaplaincy Advisors (Slater, 2009). The contents page and summary of this study can be found at Appendix A. This initial qualitative inquiry identified six main themes that presented the *prima facie* questions that guided the development of the main research. The questions were:

1. What is the significance of the renewed growth and interest in chaplaincy from the contexts of chaplaincy, the academy and church institutions?
2. What is the theological rationale of the practice?
3. What is the integrity of chaplaincy as a form of ministry? Is it different from parish or congregational ministry and if so, in what ways?
4. Why do many chaplains feel that their work is not valued by the church in the same way as parish or congregational ministry?

5. What is the relationship between chaplaincy and the institutional church?
6. What structures of training, support and accountability are required for effective chaplaincy practice?

The subsequent engagement with the literature (Slater, 2011a) enabled me to explore the practice of chaplaincy in relation to several relevant social and theological perspectives and in so doing to identify a lack of representation of chaplaincy in the missiological and ministerial discourses of the church. This situation has implications for the mission of the church and also for the development and resourcing of chaplaincy. It became clear that chaplaincy did not have a voice within the central discourses of the institutional church and that in order for it to find a voice and to be heard, there was a need to describe its significance in the contemporary ecclesial and cultural context and in so doing 'to articulate the integrity of chaplaincy within the mission and ministry of the church as a basis for the development and possible transformation of practice' (Slater, 2011c).

In Paper One (Appendix B) I engaged with the Christian tradition through theological writing in missiology, ministry and ecclesiology. This is the first of three papers that together constitute Stage One of the professional doctorate. The process of engaging with the literature, presented in the previous chapter, enabled me to clarify the main focus and theological import of the research. This informed the development of the research question: *What is the significance of the recent development of chaplaincy practice in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church in England?* In order to answer this question, I needed to find ways and means of describing and understanding what was happening, how the people involved understood what was happening and the processes involved. The initial research process is represented in the Figure 2.1 below:

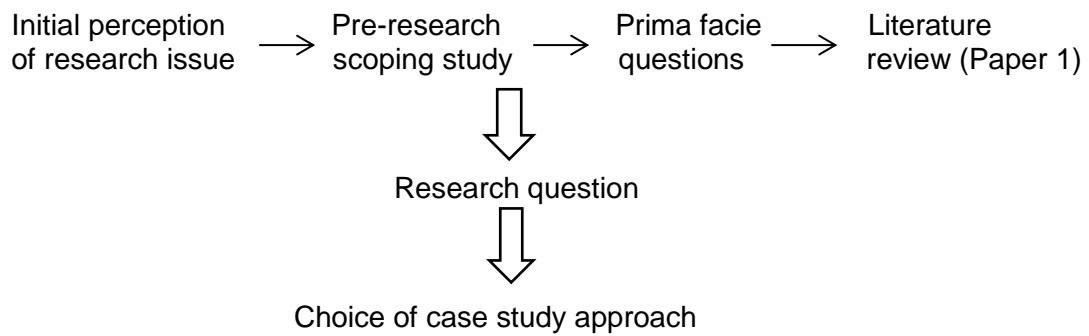


Figure 2.1: The initial research process

Locating the study within qualitative research

The study is situated within the broad field of qualitative inquiry because I was seeking to understand chaplaincy in terms of the meanings people brought to it. As Cresswell (2007, p.36) notes, the constantly changing nature of qualitative inquiry makes it difficult to advance a definition, as evidenced by the evolving definition of Denzin and Lincoln in the various editions of their *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994, 2000, 2005). However, their following definition does contain what I understand to be the basic elements of qualitative inquiry that are important for this study:

‘Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’ (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, cited in Swinton and Mowat 2006, p.29).

The emphasis is on data collection with people in the natural context in which they experience the research issue in order to elicit, identify and develop understandings of the meanings that participants bring to that issue. The inductive approaches to data collection and analysis used in qualitative research result in the development and creation of theory. Inductive research is thus high in validity but low in reliability and therefore conclusions

from this type of research cannot be generalised. The main philosophical assumptions that characterise qualitative research are set out in Table 2.1.

Assumption	Question	Characteristics	Implications for Practice (examples)
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is subjective & multiple, as seen by participants	Researcher uses quotes & themes in words of participants & provides evidence of different perspectives
Epistemological	What is the relationship between the researcher & that being researched?	Researcher attempts to lessen distance between themselves & that being researched	Researcher collaborates, spends time in field with participants & becomes an 'insider'
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden & that biases are present	Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative & includes their own interpretation in conjunction with those of participants
Rhetorical	What is the language of research?	Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using the personal voice, uses qualitative terms & limited definitions	Researcher uses an engaging style of narrative
Methodological	What is the process of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic in context & uses an emerging design	Researcher works with particulars before generalizations, describes the context in detail & revises questions from experiences in the field

Table 2.1: Philosophical Assumptions of Qualitative Research with Implications for practice. Simplified from Cresswell (Cresswell, 2007, p.17).

Cresswell (2007, p.36) notes that Denzin and Lincoln's most recent definition of qualitative research emphasises not only its capacity to describe, construct and interpret meaning but also the capacity of its practices to transform the world. I would want to espouse this emphasis in this study, given the action-oriented approach of both the Professional Doctorate and

Practical Theology within which it is situated, along with Creswell's own emphasis on an inductive approach to data analysis that seeks to identify patterns or themes.

Creswell's description of qualitative research also includes the nature of the final report which is exemplified in this thesis: it 'includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action' (2007, p.37).

Epistemological assumptions

The constructivist-interpretive paradigm⁴

The characterisation of qualitative inquiry set out above implies a particular view of the world and perspectives on truth and knowledge and how they are perceived that contrasts with the positivist tradition of the natural sciences. The form of realism that can be seen as having dominated positivistic inquiry has been based on the assumption that there is an objective truth that can be accessed by scientific methods within which process the researcher is detached from the object of the research. In contrast, a constructivist approach assumes that there are multiple realities that are individually and socially constructed and in which we all participate. The researcher is therefore inevitably involved in the research process as a participant and can never be a detached, objective observer. Meaning arises from the social interaction of individuals as they construct and interpret the meaning of their individual and social experience. As Swinton (2001, p.97) points out, this perspective proposes that, 'all meaning emerges from the shared interaction of individuals within human society.'

This view resonates with the contemporary assumption that there is no single reality and therefore no single narrative that can explain reality; human beings are constantly engaged in the process of constructing and interpreting their experience and the meaning of any given reality is open to negotiation.

⁴ Paradigm is here taken to mean a fundamental set of beliefs that guides actions

This implies that it is valid to listen to different narratives pertaining to human experience each of which will be the fruit of a particular process of construction and interpretation influenced by inter and intra-personal, cultural and social factors. As I will go on to discuss, this is particularly apt to this case study research given its emphasis on gathering multiple perspectives and narratives in relation to chaplaincy and its acknowledgement of the important influence of the personal, social and cultural context to the shaping of understandings and practice. In contrast to the positivist approach that assumes there is objective, value-free truth that the researcher can discover, the constructivist-interpretive paradigm understands truth claims as being dialogical and open to negotiation when conflicting understandings of such claims emerge.

Critical realism

At one extreme of this paradigm, it would therefore be possible to adopt the view that all reality is constructed and that all truth is relative. However, given that this study is located within Practical Theology, I take a less purely interpretive epistemological stance. This stance builds on Swinton and Mowat's contention (2006, p.11) that the discipline is fundamentally concerned with the discernment of truth and 'takes seriously the reality of truth and the importance of normativity'. As a practical theologian, I take into account the claim of the Christian tradition to have received revelation, a claim which posits a fundamental reality as given and accessible. As a researcher in practical theology, I therefore take the view that whilst there may be many different perceptions of a particular reality and truth may be subject-oriented rather than researcher-defined, nevertheless there is a reality that can be accessed albeit one which is constructed and interpreted in different ways. As the ensuing case studies will show, different narratives reveal different perspectives on a particular reality, in this instance the phenomenon called chaplaincy. The assumption in attending to these multiple perceptions is that taken as a whole, they will bring us closer to an understanding of what that reality might look like (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, p.36).

I adopt the epistemological stance outlined above as apt to the constructivist-interpretive paradigm of the research within the discipline of Practical Theology. Swinton (2001, p.98) characterises this form of *critical realism* as accepting that, 'reality can be known a little better through our constructions while at the same time recognising that such constructions are always provisional and open to challenge.' Wright (1992), writing as a biblical scholar, describes it as:

'the process of "knowing" that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence "realism"), while fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence "critical")' (1992, p.35).

The assumption is that external reality is always perceived from within a prior framework (1992, p.43) and therefore what is needed is a more nuanced epistemology than one based on the 'hard-and-fast distinction between objective and subjective' (1992, p.44). Wright's form of critical realism is presented as essentially *relational* assuming that 'To know is to be in a relation with the known' allowing fully for:

'the actuality of knowledge beyond that of one's own sense-data (that which the 'objectivist' desires to safeguard), while also fully allowing for the involvement of the knower in the act of knowing (that upon which the 'subjectivist' will rightly insist)' (1992, p.45).

Wright's concern here is with the critical reading of texts but this epistemological assumption also undergirds this case study research which identifies the existence of 'chaplaincy' as a real phenomenon whilst seeking to understand that reality in dialogue with my own and participant's constructions and interpretations of chaplaincy and with relevant theoretical perspectives from theology and other disciplines.

Reflexivity

Within this epistemological approach truth is approached through a dialogic, interpretive process and therefore as researcher, I too am enmeshed in this process, unable to stand outside the field of inquiry. The basic ontological assumption is that human beings are interpretive beings who constantly seek to make meaning out of experience. This assumption is influenced by the conviction that forms the basis of Gadamer's hermeneutics, derived from Heidegger, 'that understanding is not just one of the various possible behaviours of the subject, but the mode of being of There-being itself' (1979, p.xviii). The interpretivist paradigm therefore includes the recognition that the world views, values and pre-existing theories of the researcher inevitably influence and shape the research (Willis, 2007) and the research process in turn influences the researcher.

A reflexive approach seeks to make this reciprocal relationship explicit and in so doing to acknowledge the researcher as the primary research tool enabling access to the meanings of the issue being explored (Swinton and Mowat, 2006). In this view, researchers do not see themselves as being detached from the object of the research but as integral to the process bringing unique insights, experience and understandings to the development of knowledge. Swinton and Mowat (2006, p.59) describe reflexivity as, 'the process of critical self-reflection carried out by the researcher throughout the research process that enables her to monitor and respond to her contribution to the proceedings.' Kleinsasser (2000, p.155) understands it as making a contribution to the development of both the research and the researcher describing it as, 'a methodical process of learning about self as a researcher which in turn illuminates deeper, richer meanings about personal, theoretical, ethical and epistemological aspects of the research.'

This stress on the importance of the role of reflexivity in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research resonates strongly with Gadamer's hermeneutics which have influenced my own approach to the research. As the study will show, of particular relevance is his explication of the interpretive nature of reality and 'the universality of the hermeneutical

viewpoint' (1979, p.xix). Central to this is his call in *Truth and Method* for the 'rehabilitation of the concept of prejudice' (1979, p.246). The pre-understandings (prejudices) with which the inquirer approaches the 'text' or research issue are not to be seen only as a source of unscientific distortion and bias but also as being 'productive', a necessary means of enabling us to develop insight and understanding (1979, p.263). This asserts the contextual grounding of all understanding. We are always standing within a situation and therefore hermeneutics take place between the 'historically intended separate object' and the contextually situated horizon of the present. According to Gadamer (1979, p.263), 'its work is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place.' I take the view that this is also the major function of reflexivity.

For Gadamer, the inquirer can never be fully detached from the object of observation. Understanding comes when the horizon of the inquirer's world is fused with the horizon of the text or, in the present case, the horizons of the research participants, in order to gain deeper insight into the phenomenon being explored. 'To acquire an horizon' says Gadamer (1979, p.272), 'means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand - not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer proportion.' Understanding emerges through the interpretive dialogic process of the inquirer moving backwards and forwards between the whole and the parts in the 'hermeneutical circle' (1979, p. 235). This movement is characteristic of this multiple case study in which the inquiry moves backwards and forwards between the individual stories and perceptions of participants, the story of each case study and the wider context of the growth in chaplaincy roles.

Within this paradigm, I am aware that throughout the study I have played an integral role as researcher in the generation of knowledge about chaplaincy. Therefore, it was important to be explicit from the beginning about the experience and understandings of chaplaincy that I brought to the research. The Prologue therefore begins by locating the research within the context of

my own phronesis. My phronesis has been important throughout the research. For example, my knowledge and experience of being a chaplain helped me to establish trust and a rapport with participants. This meant that I was able to elicit detailed information and most participants were willing to give full accounts of their work experience. I have espoused a personal reflexivity throughout the research process enabled by the writing of a research journal in which feelings, responses, thoughts and experiences have been recorded rendering them available for critical reflection at each stage of the process and in supervisions. This has also been the place where I have recorded decisions about the research design and methods that have enabled me to understand chaplaincy and to answer the research question in a particular way. This epistemological reflexivity is exemplified in Chapter Three in which I justify the chosen research approach and methods.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The philosophical and epistemological assumptions set out above underpin my choice of hermeneutic phenomenology as appropriate for this study. This approach is both a methodology with particular philosophical antecedents (Cresswell 2007, p.58) which I will describe here, and a method which I will describe in the following chapter.

In its original form, Phenomenology does not aim to provide explanations of the way things are by developing theory but aims rather to deepen understanding and insight by determining what an experience means to a person in a particular context apart from any meanings that the researcher might bring to a situation. It seeks to understand how people construct meaning in and through their lived experience. According to van Manen (1990, p.9), 'Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, "What is this or that kind of experience like?"' In attempting to gain insightful descriptions of the way in which people directly experience the world, 'it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world' (1990, p.9) This provision of deeper insights into the way things are can enable people to see the world differently and so to

respond to the world in a different way (Swinton and Mowat, 2006). However, the interpretive paradigm precludes the assumption that there can ever be pure description of lived experience. It asserts rather that description always contains interpretation because it is always mediated by some form of expression such as talk, behaviour or text (van Manen 1990, p.25). In addition to this, the involvement of the researcher has to be acknowledged.

This introduces the hermeneutic component of phenomenology on which van Manen cites Heidegger: 'The meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation...The phenomenology is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting' (Heidegger 1962 cited in van Manen 1990, p.25). This implies that in order to come to a full understanding, it is not sufficient to have an intuitive, reflective grasp of an experience in itself, but that, 'a true reflection on lived experience is a thoughtful, reflective grasping of what it is that renders this or that particular experience its special significance' (1990, p.32). The phenomenological approach starts by identifying a phenomenon then seeks to describe the experience of individuals in relation to that phenomenon before trying to describe what it is that participants who experience the phenomenon have in common (Cresswell 2007, p.58). The purpose is therefore to come to a description of the essence of a phenomenon or a 'grasp of the very nature of the thing' (van Manen 1990, p.177). Hermeneutic phenomenology is therefore appropriate to this study because it seeks to accommodate this descriptive stance of phenomenology which allows things to speak for themselves within an interpretive paradigm that recognises that all phenomena are interpreted.

Choosing the case study approach

Cresswell (2007, p.73) notes that the case study approach has a long history across the disciplines of psychology (Freud), law (case law), medicine (case analysis) and political science (case reports). However, there is no common view within contemporary writing on case study research as to whether it is a method (Yin, 2003), a methodology (Cresswell, 2007), a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 2008), an approach (Simons, 2009) or a focus (Thomas,

2011). Given that case study cannot be defined by methods but rather involves, 'the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system' (Cresswell 2007, p.73), I take the view with Simons that it is an approach. In this study, I use Simon's definition because it includes the research focus and action oriented purpose:

'Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic ... programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action' (Simons 2009, p.21).

My decision to adopt this approach was informed by the two difficulties that I encountered during my preliminary scoping research. Firstly, it was difficult to find a focus of inquiry because of the diversity of context and models of chaplaincy practice. It was hard to establish criteria for selecting participants when every chaplaincy role looked different according to context. Secondly, I needed to find a way of moving beyond the gathering of narrative accounts of diverse practice to take the necessary step of interpretive analysis that could inform both theory and future practice. I wanted to answer the questions that I had identified in the scoping study: What was happening in terms of the development of chaplaincy roles? Why was it happening? How was it happening and what were the processes involved? The in-depth exploration of an issue from multiple-perspectives makes Case Study a particularly appropriate approach when these types of 'how' and 'why' questions need to be addressed (Yin 2003, p.9).

Initially, I considered using an 'action research' approach which is also grounded in a participatory world view and uses a collaborative way of working viewing participants as co-inquirers (McLeod 2011, p.218) in order to pursue practical solutions to issues of concern. However, as the focus of the

inquiry needed to be on both practical issues and the significance of those issues in the wider context of the mission of the church, I decided that the case study approach would best enable me to address these different levels of concern. Action research was also not practicable given the amount of time required for participation. Participants with research experience in one case study told me in initial conversations that they did not have time to participate in 'action research'.

The case study approach enabled me to address the first difficulty raised by my initial scoping study by providing a bounded focus for the research. I selected three geographically defined studies that provided contrasting ministerial contexts within which chaplaincy roles had developed. The choice was geographically based rather than based on the selection of a particular chaplaincy context because the distinctive focus of the research is the development of roles in community contexts and therefore I wanted to start with the location. The contexts were: an Anglican multi-parish rural benefice, a large Anglican team ministry in an urban town centre and an ecumenical project in a semi-urban market town.

The approach allowed me to address the second difficulty by enabling me to use multiple qualitative methods to elicit the different understandings participants brought to the situation and to build a thick, holistic description of the complexities of the development of chaplaincy practices in their real life context. Case study allowed me not only to provide descriptions of practice but also to capture the processes and relationships involved in the emergence of chaplaincy roles. These data were then available for analysis and interpretation (Slater, 2011c). As I will discuss in the next chapter, the methods that I used within this approach allowed both the unique voices of participants to be heard and a set of themes to be developed from an analysis of the data. These could then be explored in critical dialogue with different theoretical perspectives and with my own understandings in order to answer the research question and to develop the implications for practice.

Case study design

Authors identify different kinds and taxonomies of case studies some of which are set out by Thomas (2011, p.91) in Table 2.2. Stake's taxonomy is helpful when considering research design. He admits that reports and authors do not fit neatly into his three types but that he understands them as being 'useful for thinking about purpose' (2008, p.124). *Intrinsic case study* is undertaken in order to better understand a particular case rather than a generic phenomenon; *instrumental case study* seeks to provide insight into a wider issue; *multiple or collective case study* is an extension of instrumental study to several cases that are chosen in the belief that understanding them will lead to a better understanding and possible theorising about a larger collection of studies (2008, p.123). The important point to take from this is that the design of the study needs to flow from the purpose of the research.

Merriam (1988)	Stake (1995)	Bassey (1999)	De Vaus (2001)	Mitchell (2006) (drawing on Eckstein, 1975)	Yin (2009)
Descriptive	Intrinsic	Seeking a theory	Descriptive/explanatory	Illustrative	Critical
Interpretative	Instrumental	Testing a theory	Testing or building a theory	Social analytical	Extreme or unique
Evaluative	Collective	Storytelling	Single or multiple cases	Extended (over time)	Longitudinal
		Drawing a picture	Holistic, embedded	Configurative, idiographic	Representative
		Evaluative	Parallel or sequential	Disciplined, configurative	Revelatory
			Retrospective or prospective	Heuristic	
				Plausibility probes	

Table 2.2: Kinds of case studies as defined by different authors

Thomas (2011, p.93) simplifies the various taxonomies into a helpful process model for case study design which links the choice of focus or subject with purpose, approach and process. He argues that at each stage a decision is required about the choice of the next component in the process.

In terms of this model the current study focuses on exemplary cases so the subjects are *key*, the purpose is *instrumental* in that it is seeking to understand the significance of the cases in the wider context of growth in chaplaincy roles as well as being *exploratory* and *evaluative*. In essence, the approach is therefore *interpretive* and orientated towards *building a theory*. In order to effect this, the process uses *parallel* multiple case studies that enable me to do a cross-case analysis. The design process is thus represented and summarised in Table 2.3.

Subject	Purposes	Approaches	Processes
Key cases	Instrumental Exploratory Evaluative	Interpretive Building a theory	Multiple Parallel

Table 2.3: A process model of the case study design

Strengths and potential limitations of qualitative case study

I have discussed above some of the strengths of the approach in relation to my rationale for choosing it but in summary these can be said to be:

- It enables a situation to be explored in depth from multiple perspectives;
- It enables the researcher not only to develop descriptions of practice but also understandings of the processes and relationships involved in a case;
- It can document multiple and sometimes contested perspectives and viewpoints and in so doing help to explain how and why things happened (Simons 2009, p.23);
- It is flexible and can use whatever methods and epistemologies are most appropriate in understanding the case;
- It can be written in accessible language that includes descriptions of people, events and settings which can engage a wide audience allowing the study to resonate with the reader's own experience so that they can

use their tacit knowledge to understand its significance in their own context.

The potential limitations of this approach are sometimes expressed as concerns about the subjectivity of the researcher, the capacity for generalisation from case studies and the question of their use in informing policy (2009, p.24). Building on Simons, I would argue that these are not necessarily limitations but issues that can be addressed according to how they are perceived and interpreted. The above discussion about the epistemological assumptions underlying this study and the importance it places on reflexivity addresses the issue of the subjectivity of the researcher seeing it as a necessary means to understanding. I will discuss the issues of generalisability, and usefulness in Chapter Three.

Ethical issues

One of the main issues that this research seeks to address is the absence of a chaplaincy voice in central church discourses. One of the purposes of the studies therefore was to allow the voices of chaplains to be heard. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.23) note, the interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings has a political dimension given that action and clinically oriented qualitative researchers can 'create spaces for participants (the other) to speak. The evaluator becomes the conduit through which such voices can be heard.' I have been aware of this role from the start of the research and recognised the need to engage participants in the research process as having both political and epistemological point (Simons 2009, p.23). Both participants and I were aware that the research could have implications for the thinking of the church and that it would be shared with a wider church audience. The main ethical issues with which I had to deal were thus consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and participation with its implications about who controls knowledge.

Within this context the creation of trust and respect through the development of open ongoing relationships with participants has been a key ethical dimension. This emphasis on relational ethics (Simons, 2009) meant that

issues that arose could be addressed cooperatively through dialogue (Etherington, 2007). With this ethical stance I sought to ensure that participants felt able to contact me at any time if they had any concerns about the research.

Formal ethics approval was gained from the University Research Ethics Committee before I began the research. This ensured that I had thought through the ethical implications of the design of the research and that it fulfilled the basic ethical principle of 'doing no harm'. The committee was concerned about the issue of anonymity and that participants should have the opportunity to see the written case study. I describe below how these concerns were addressed.

Consent

Because two of the studies involved groups of people, I needed to be clear that participants understood that the study would be of the team or group as a whole as well as the contributions of individuals. In CS2 and CS3 which involved groups of people, in order to ensure that individuals did not feel coerced into participating by the group context, I designed the gaining of informed consent as a process. I first discussed the research proposal with the whole group. I then gave individuals a written information sheet and gave them time to consider together whether or not they wanted to participate as a group. It was made clear to individuals that they were free to decline to participate. I then went back to the group for their decision and at this point gained written consent on behalf of the group from the senior person. Before the individual interviews, I went through the information again, gave opportunity for people to ask questions and gained signed consent from each participant. The participant information sheet and consent form can be found at Appendix F.

Confidentiality and anonymity

This was a difficult issue to address given that the case studies would be descriptive of particular contexts that people in the wider church community might recognise. This meant that I could not guarantee that people would

not be identified and therefore I needed to be transparent about this. The participant information sheet therefore states:

‘Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that all sources of data remain confidential and individuals or organisations will not be named in any research report or subsequent use of the data, it is not possible to give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality given that the descriptive nature of case studies may render the location identifiable’ (Appendix F).

None of the participants raised this as an issue. However, the participants in CS3 expressed a preference for being named and identified as they wanted their work to have a wider audience. I discussed this option with participants in the other contexts who were all equally happy to be named. However, I decided to anonymise the studies as originally intended and to maintain as great a degree of confidentiality as possible for participants. Identification might mean that people restricted what they said and anonymity would protect against someone later regretting that they had been named or being harmed by an insensitive reader response to the study.

Participation in the research process

The intention to involve participants in the research process is congruent with the epistemological assumptions set out at the beginning of this chapter and the relational ethical stance of the study. Participants were sent the interview transcripts to check for accuracy and to confirm that they were happy for the information that they had provided to be in the public domain. The written case studies were later sent to participants to give them opportunity to see and to respond to how they were portrayed in the interpreted study. CS1 was done first and was written up as Paper Two (Appendix C) and later published as an article in *Practical Theology* (Slater, 2012). Minor emendations were made as a result of participant responses, including the change of title of one participant, but there were no major difficulties. Had there been difficulties at this stage, I would have entered into dialogue with the participant and found a way of renegotiating what had been written

without damaging the integrity of the research. This position accords with Simons' view that:

'It is only in and through relationships in the field, supported by procedures and negotiations over what is fair, relevant and just in the precise socio-political context, that we can *know* if we have acted ethically in relation to those who are part of our case' (Simons 2009, p.110).

The strengths and limitations of using case study

The case study approach enabled me to build relationships of trust with participants based on mutual respect and the recognition of my own experience and understanding of chaplaincy. This meant that most of the participants were willing to talk to me about their understanding of their work including the tensions and difficulties that they experienced. In retrospect, I acknowledge that a limitation of this study is that for CS1, I interviewed only one participant. In light of the subsequent studies and my developing understanding of the methodological importance of representing multiple perspectives, it may have been appropriate to seek an interview with other stakeholders in that context, such as the bishop or churchwarden, in order to provide different perspectives on the role enabling the data to be viewed from different angles as discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have set out the methodological assumptions of the research and have discussed the choice and use of case study. I have located the research within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm of qualitative research paying particular attention to the theological approach and the place of reflexivity within this paradigm. In the context of this paradigm, the choice of the case study approach was discussed and justified along with the design and use of case study in the research process including its strengths and limitations. Chapter Three will describe the methods of data collection and analysis used in the studies.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

‘In-depth particularization – universal understanding’ (Simons 2009, p.167)

In the context of the philosophical assumptions discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter will describe and justify the methods used within the case studies and the processes of data analysis. It will also address the questions of ‘validity’, generalisation from case studies and their usefulness for policy-making. The research process represented in this thesis took place between September 2009 and January 2013. This includes the interpretive act of writing up the thesis. Most of the data collection and field-work took place between March and November 2011.

Multi-method data collection

I have discussed above my rationale for identifying the key cases to study. In each case the main methods of data collection were: documentary analysis and the collection of information in the public domain; informal observation at meetings and visits to the contexts; semi-structured interviews. Throughout the process I kept a reflexive research journal and made field notes after each encounter or interview.

This use of a variety of methods is intended to provide triangulation for the data and to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.7) note, in this view triangulation is seen as an ‘alternative to validation’. In fact both Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Simons (2009, p.131) suggest that the crystal is a more useful central image for validity in qualitative inquiry than the triangle. The crystal image allows us to view data from different angles and to display multiple realities and how they intersect, or not, in a given context. In this view, triangulation can be claimed to strengthen validity not on the basis of a one-dimensional intersection of methods, sources or perspectives but, ‘the simultaneous display of multiple refracted realities’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, p.8). As Simons (2009, p.131) argues, this is a particularly apt perspective in qualitative case study research in which openness to different ways of seeing and constructing

meanings, 'enables us to pursue interpretations further and deepen understanding to portray a valid picture'. In addition to the use of multiple methods, I have used respondent validation as an additional strategy congruent with the relational ethical stance that underpins the research. Interview transcripts and the post-analysis case study stories were sent to participants so that they could check for accuracy and the adequacy and fairness of the representation of their experience. Open researcher-participant relationships were maintained throughout the research.

Given the epistemological assumptions of this research, I am aware that it is interpretive all the way through and not just at explicit moments of analysis. My personal and professional pre-understandings of chaplaincy informed the preparatory research in 2009 which in turn informed the literature search. This meant that the interview schedules I constructed for chaplains and their colleagues were already the product of an interpretive analytic process. The interview schedules can be found at Appendix G. The areas covered by the questions were designed to elicit data relevant to the research focus and question that I had already identified. They included: the context and development of the work; the content of the role; understandings of the role both practical and theological; the relationship of chaplaincy to parish ministry and the mission of the church.

Although I had interview schedules to ensure that the main areas of interest were considered, participants were given scope to explore the issues in their own way and had opportunity at the end to add anything that they wanted to say about chaplaincy. The interviews were thus designed to address the core concerns of the research whilst enabling the individual voices of participants to be heard. The interviews were digitally recorded, with participants' consent, so that they were available for me to transcribe. I was aware that key informants may present the work in a particular way but intended to mitigate this problem by the breadth of interviews and the data collected by other methods which together enabled a holistic description of the cases.

Data analysis

Unlike in Ethnography or Grounded Theory, constructing a preliminary theoretical proposition or hypothetical story about why things occur is necessary to case study (Yin 2003, p.28). It is this preliminary understanding of what is being studied that guides the case selection and research design, the data to be collected and the method of data analysis. In view of this, I decided that it was not appropriate to use Grounded Theory which classically elides data collection and analysis and uses emergent analysis to inform sequential data collection in order to generate theory (Charmaz, 2006). The Case Study approach set the boundaries to the data collection from the start. It was also inappropriate to use a method such as Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis which focus on language use and the functionality of talk (Braun and Clarke, 2006) given that my research interest was in the experience and understandings of participants and the patterns of meaning or themes that could be uncovered in participants' accounts across the whole data set. I therefore decided that the best method to use was Inductive Thematic Analysis. This keeps the analysis grounded in the data without it being tied to a particular theoretical perspective (Braun and Clarke, 2006; McLeod, 2011).

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) define thematic analysis as, 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.' Some of its advantages are: it is flexible; its results are generally accessible; it is amenable to work within a participatory research paradigm; it can summarise key features of a large data set and/or provide a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973); it can highlight similarities and differences across the data set; it can generate new insights; and it can help to produce qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.97). This makes it particularly suited as the method of analysis in this study. As an identified method it eschews the passive language of 'themes emerging' and acknowledges the active role of the researcher in identifying, selecting, interpreting and reporting themes within the theoretical framework of the research.

With Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82), I understand a theme as capturing 'something important about the data in relation to the research question, and [that it] represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set.' I chose to use an inductive as opposed to a theoretical thematic analysis so that the themes are developed from the data. This meant that initially I free coded the whole data set so that nothing would be missed. As Braun and Clarke (2006, p.84) note, I also had to decide whether to identify the themes at a semantic or explicit level or at a latent or interpretive level. An analysis at the explicit level identifies themes within the semantic content of the data whilst at the latent level it goes beyond this to identify and examine the underlying ideas and concepts that inform the semantic content. Although I did some coding at both these levels, given the paradigm within which I was working, my basic approach was latent thematic analysis in which the development of the themes was part of the interpretive process. As Braun and Clarke (2006, p.86) point out, this kind of analysis is a recursive process that requires a constant movement between the coded extracts, the entire data set and the analysis that is being produced of which writing is an integral part. This accords with the hermeneutic assumptions described in Chapter Two.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) set out the process of thematic analysis that I have broadly followed and on which I draw throughout this section. I will use the six phases they suggest in order to describe the process of analysis that I undertook.

1. Familiarising yourself with your data

I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading, listening to and transcribing the verbal data and noting in my journal thoughts, insights and ideas.

2. Generating initial codes

I used NVivo9 software as a tool to help me manage the large volume of data and to help ensure rigour in the coding process (Bazeley, 2007). I free-coded the transcripts in each case until all the data was coded.

3. Searching for themes

I collated the codes into parent nodes which represented potential themes in each case. I then compared the nodes across the case studies and identified three main nodes. I collated all the relevant coded data extracts within these nodes and identified three potential main themes.

4. Reviewing themes

I re-read the data to check whether the themes were congruent with the data set as a whole and to code any data that had been missed. This enabled me to identify the three main themes and to see the overall story that they tell about the data.

5. Defining and naming themes

As part of the process of ongoing analysis, I refined and decided on the names of the themes and considered how each one related to the entire data set and to the research question. The interpretive analysis of each theme is represented in Part Four.

6. Producing the report

The propositions and arguments made about chaplaincy in answer to the research question are made in relation to the themes I identified through the thematic analysis.

Generalisation and the usability of case study findings

The primary purpose for undertaking a case study is to effect an in-depth exploration of the particularity of the unique case (Simons 2009, p.3). This means that the approach rests on the production of idiographic knowledge which presumes that knowledge discovered in unique, non-replicable experiences holds meaning and value (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p.43). This kind of knowledge is fundamental to both qualitative research and practical theology (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p.42) and contrasts with nomothetic knowledge in the positivist tradition which is replicable so that findings can be transferred from one context to another. Because case study findings relate to unique situations, the question of generalisation and the usability of case study findings in different situations has to be addressed.

As Swinton and Mowat (2006, p.46) state, the main task of qualitative research is to provide as accurate and rich a description of the research issue as possible. Whilst the findings are not directly transferrable to other contexts, they can resonate with the experiences of others in similar contexts, offer insights and raise issues that have significance beyond the particularities of the case. This holds the possibility for the qualitative researcher to use an interpretive hermeneutic to develop theoretical propositions based on the findings which can then be tested in other situations. In this study, the cross-case analysis that I undertook using a grounded approach has enabled me to posit a theory about the growth in chaplaincy roles which can be tested beyond the initial studies. It therefore, potentially, holds a wider significance.

The issue of generalisation crystallises the rich potential of the paradox at the heart of case study: the more in-depth the exploration of the particular, the greater the potential both for the discovery of something unique and the recognition of a universal 'truth'. As Simons (2009, p.167) states, the aim in this perspective is, 'to try to capture the essence of the particular in a way we all recognize.' The analogy is with all truly creative art: it is through the study of the unique case that we come to understand the universal.

This relates to the question of how case study can be useful in policy decision making. This question is directly relevant to the discussion of the implications of the research for practice in Chapter Ten. Firstly, drawing on Simons (2009, p.167), I contend that the capacity of case study to present multiple perspectives through a direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied offers opportunities for policy makers to increase their understanding of a complex social reality which can then inform the policy decisions they need to make. Secondly, the kind of cross-case analysis of multiple cases that I have undertaken here can generate insights and themes that are relevant in similar contexts. Fundamentally though, what makes a case study useful is 'the quality of the data, the understandings you present and how you justify your interpretations' (Simons 2009, p.170).

In Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 below, I have summarised the research and data analysis processes:

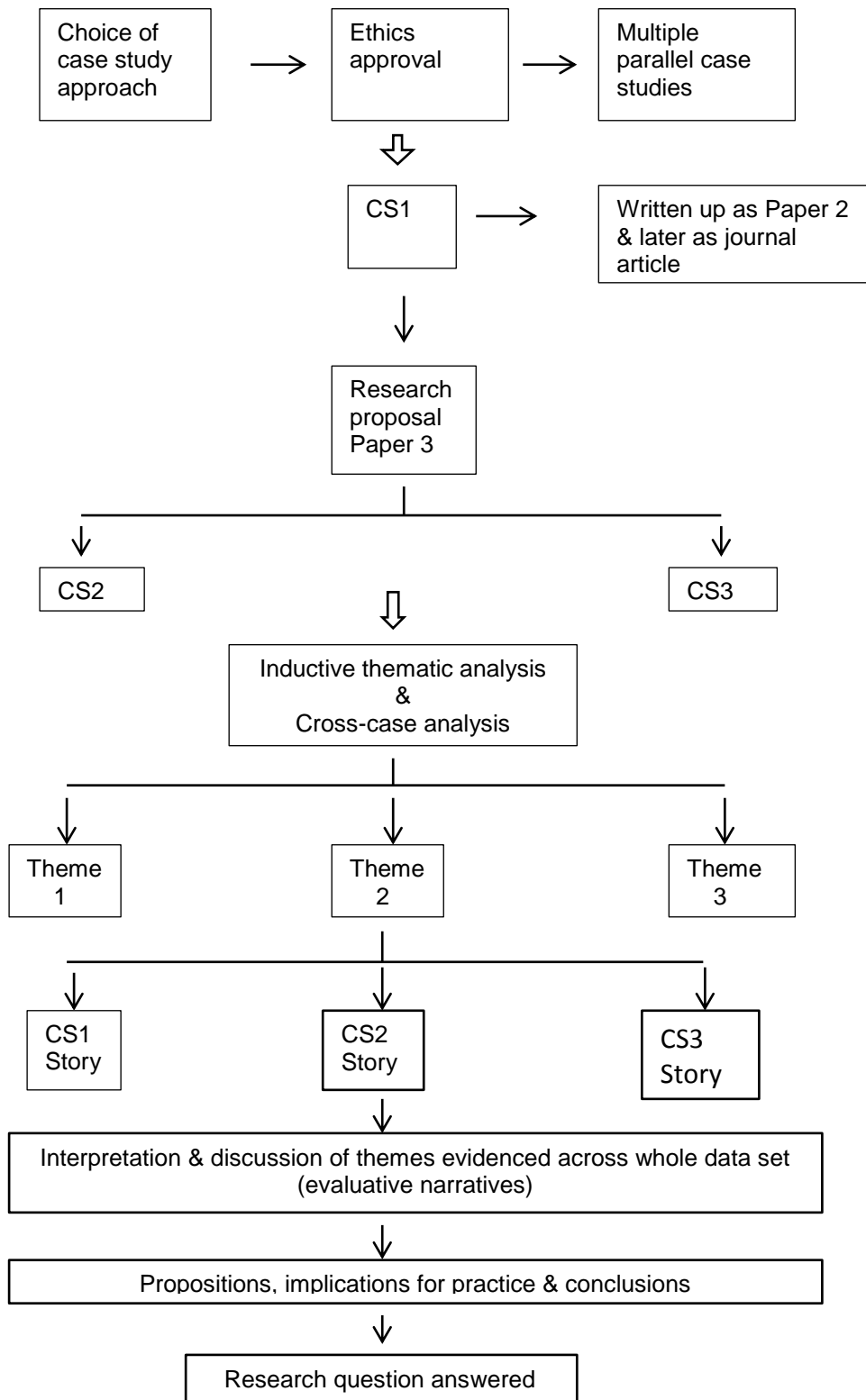


Figure 3.1: The research process

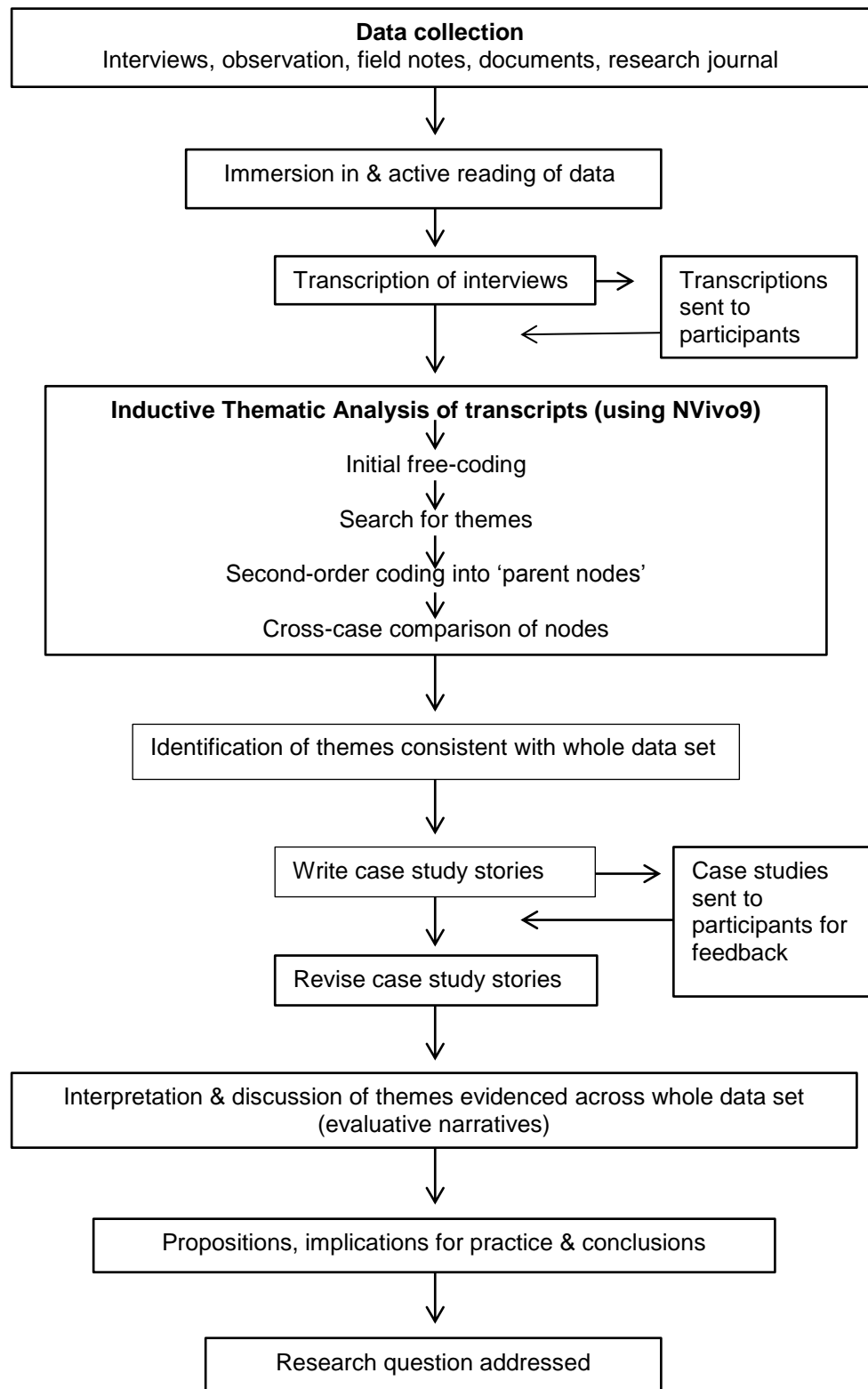


Figure 3.2: The data analysis process

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have discussed the methods of data collection and analysis used within the case studies in order to generate valid findings which have potential relevance beyond the particular contexts of the studies enabling me to answer the research question. This has been a complex iterative process. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 summarise how the overall research process and the data analysis were designed in order to answer the main research question. I have thought through and represented the methodological implications of what I have done and I have addressed the question of generalisation and the usability of case study findings.

Having presented the method of analysis, in Part Three I will present the case study stories that were written following the analysis of the raw data.

PART THREE

TELLING THE CASE STUDY STORIES

Three Geographical Case Studies of the emergence of chaplaincy roles in ministerial contexts

Part Three presents the individual stories of the three case studies. In Chapter Two I discussed the rationale for choosing case study and the way in which it provided a bounded focus for the research. I also discussed the rationale for selecting the particular contexts for the studies.

The stories were written following the data analysis and the identification of the main themes (Cf. Figure 3.1). This means that the narratives have been shaped by the interpretive hermeneutic of the research process discussed in Part Two. CS1 was done first and the other two studies were done in parallel. Although CS1 was written first, the studies are here not presented in chronological order but are organised in relation to how explicitly theologies of mission were espoused, articulated and understood by participants as informing the development of chaplaincy roles in each context. Because this developmental focus is least explicit in CS1, the summary of the story in that case is longer and more diffuse than in the other cases. CS2 offered some explanation of its missiology whilst CS3 had done substantial work on developing its missiological thinking.

In telling these stories I refer to the development of roles. In doing so I am using the term 'role' in the sociological sense of denoting the part played or function assumed by a person in a particular social context. As Carr (1997, p.134) states, 'a role is both assigned and accepted or adopted.' The effective exercise of a role involves negotiation between the person or group assigning the role and the person accepting or adopting it.

Chapter Four

Case Study One: The development of an Agricultural Chaplaincy role in a multi-parish rural benefice

Chris is an Agricultural Chaplain whom I had arranged to meet at her home in a small village. The address I had for her was that of a farm in the village. I drove up the drive to a large farmhouse, parked and rang the bell. No one came to the door and it was obvious that no one was at home. I phoned Chris and she apologised that she'd forgotten to give me her new address. She had recently retired from farming and moved into a house further down the village. It took me only a couple of minutes to drive back and find it. This sets the context for the first case study.

Chris is the self-supporting vicar of a rural benefice comprising four parishes with five churches. She is a retired farmer who trained for ordination after spending most of her life as a livestock farmer and who now lives in the same village in which she used to farm. The largest parish has fourteen hundred inhabitants and the smaller ones about three hundred inhabitants each. Chris holds several key roles within the benefice and in relation to the farming community, a situation which has grown out of her embeddedness in this particular context. Chris was originally a self-supporting curate, a role which she did not find very fulfilling. When the diocesan role of Rural Life Officer became vacant she 'felt a distinct pull to do the rural work' and asked the then bishop if she could take on and develop the role, advising the diocese and parishes on rural issues. The bishop agreed and gave her a five year license to the post. This means that Chris is authorised by and accountable to the bishop in this work and has permission to minister to the farming and rural community not just in the local area but across the three counties covered by the diocese. She is aware of the potential reach of her ministry across parish boundaries which means that liaising with local clergy and maintaining good working relationships across the diocese are important aspects of the work.

When the benefice incumbent who was training Chris as a curate retired, Chris asked the bishop if she could be considered for the post and run both roles side by side. She was appointed to the post. In addition to these roles, Chris is also a Chaplain and Regional Co-ordinator to Farm Crisis Network, a charity which provides a helpline and volunteer support to the farming community.

The emergence and development of the chaplaincy role

Chris has developed the role of Agricultural Chaplain within the remit of the Rural Life Officer post in the context of organisational change. Prior to Chris, the Rural Life Officer was a half-time paid diocesan post the focus of which was to provide diocesan-wide advice to bishops and churches on rural issues. The person in the post undertook the role alongside a half-time parish role and, according to Chris, there was no chaplaincy dimension to the role. The post was located within the diocesan Forum for Social Responsibility and managed from within the Forum. After Chris took on the role as a Self-Supporting Minister, the diocese was reorganised and the managerial post within the Forum was abolished.

The post is now line managed by the Area Bishop whom Chris sees three or four times a year. When she took on the post, Chris saw the opportunity to develop a different focus to the role: 'I do it differently because my role is more of a chaplain, fifty per cent chaplain role I think and fifty per cent as Rural Officer'. However, although Chris did produce a suggested job description for the Rural Life Officer, there is no role description or contract detailing the amount of time designated for the chaplaincy work within this remit. This means that the work is not strategically embedded in the organisation but remains an individual entrepreneurial response to the perceived needs of a particular community of people.

Although the Area Bishop authorises Chris to represent the church in this work and allows her to develop the chaplaincy work in ways that she thinks are appropriate, the chaplaincy work remains hidden within the institutional narratives of ministry making it unclear as to the grounds on which the work

would be accounted by the institution were Chris to leave the role. There is no explicitly articulated theological or ecclesiological rationale for the chaplaincy work that would enable it to command resources.

Because Chris has taken on the parish, Rural Life Officer and Chaplaincy roles incrementally and occupies them simultaneously, she understands their development in terms of an organic evolution in which roles have been shaped in parallel rather than understanding herself as having taken on distinctly specified roles. This dynamic is seen as particularly characteristic of the chaplaincy role as she reflects that, 'my chaplaincy role is probably different because I have grown the role rather than being put into a role that was already there.' Moreover, 'It's constantly evolving depending on what the current circumstances and problems are.' On one level therefore the role is presented as a personal initiative and Chris recognises that her own experience and personality have been strong determinants of the shape of the role. Speaking of chaplaincy roles in general, Chris says: 'It's a unique role and everybody has their own take on it – its people's personalities that evolve the role, I think.'

In this instance, the fact that Chris has been an integral part of the farming community for many years is fundamental to how and why the role has developed in the way that it has. Chris knows and is known by this community and this strong relational base to the work, grounded in mutual trust, is acknowledged by Chris as being fundamental, 'It's because they know me as a farmer that they will talk, they know that I would understand'. She reflects that, 'people who haven't got an empathy or a deep understanding of the people they're chaplaining with must have a more difficult role.' A farmer herself, it is this strong empathy with the farming community, its struggles, joys and sorrows that drew Chris to offer to take on the role after she was ordained.

Chris sees her identity as a Christian minister as being rooted in the parish when she reflects that, 'I'm not a good floater, I like to be bedded in somewhere, I like to have deep roots and I don't think I could do the

chaplaincy work without being rooted in my parish work.’ However, she is equally embedded in the farming community and cherishes her identity as a trusted member of that community, ‘now I don’t farm any more, it’s [the chaplaincy has] given me an excuse if you like, to go into the farming community and still be part of it.’ Chris recognises that farming and faith are bound up together on a personal level, ‘I think mainly because I’ve always farmed and I’ve had a faith (pause) it’s just grown out of that’ and this is now reflected in relation to her work as an authorised minister. Her ecclesiastical authority to minister is conferred by her ministerial training and formation and the fact that she holds a Bishop’s Licence but her solidarity with and her location as a chaplain within the social structures of the farming community are seen as being equally and essentially the source of her authority by the members of the farming community with whom she works.

Chris fulfils three authorised church roles within a particular ecclesiastical and geographical context which means that there is a substantial degree of overlap between the roles. The same issues that are relevant to rural communities, such as rural transport, occur across all three roles, farmers may attend church and Chris acknowledges that there are times when she is ‘not quite sure which hat I have on’. This blurring of role boundaries is a marked feature of the work underscored by the fact that there is no chaplaincy role description. Given the amount of work for one person that these roles represent, it is not surprising that managing the available time can be a challenge. Chris sees the parish work as coming first, ‘my parishes come first, the chaplaincy role runs alongside’ and she works collaboratively with her church wardens, relying on them to alert her if the work is getting out of balance. Because Chris doesn’t work in the context of a team, any tension that there may be between the parish and chaplaincy work is articulated and experienced in terms of time management rather than being articulated in terms of role boundaries and expectations.

At the heart of this complexity sits the fact that there is no explicit delineation of what the chaplaincy role comprises. What does the chaplain actually do and what does she see as being distinctive of the role? What does being

designated a chaplain enable her to do that she would not otherwise be able to do as a parish minister? In order to answer these questions I will first describe the central components of the role.

What does the chaplain do?

As an Agricultural Chaplain Chris sees herself as having a ministry to farmers which is 'mainly a listening role.' She tries to go to the stock market every Monday where she aims to be 'a safe pair of ears for people to talk to.' On the level of practical support, if people have a particular problem that is causing stress or anxiety she may help by liaising with organisations like Farm Crisis Network or with other appropriate support organisations if there are financial issues. She notes that 'because I understand the problems and I've dealt with them myself for years that is something that I'm trusted to do.' The high level of trust that is central to the work is the fruit of the establishment of a broad base of good relationships built on listening, empathy and understanding. Out of this has grown work with the occasional offices of baptisms, weddings and funerals for which she gains the consent of the parish priest if those involved are from another parish. She offers prayers at the opening meet of the local hunt and talks to local organisations such as Young Farmers and the National Farmers Union although at this point the role blurs with that of Rural Officer. She is generally a distinctive Christian presence within and for the farming community, engaging with their everyday lived experience: 'it's generally just meeting farmers where I meet them really, which is all over the place.'

Because Chris has established a trusted presence within the farming community she is able to exercise what she calls a 'just in case role'. This means that in times of personal or communal crisis such as the outbreak of serious disease like Foot and Mouth, 'we are there ready', able to respond effectively because the situation is known from the inside and the relational and pastoral foundations are already firm. As Chris says, 'It's being alongside people so that you build up a trust, so that the trust is there when you need it.'; 'being alongside' is seen as fundamental to the work, 'it's building up trust and being alongside and being part of what they're doing'.

In this instance, the wider involvements with structural and policy issues that may be dimensions of chaplaincy in different contexts are engaged with through Chris's other roles. For example, issues concerning rural transport or fair trade local food may be engaged with as Rural Officer or environmental issues may be addressed through parish initiatives such as a Lent Carbon Fast promoted by the charity Tear Fund.

The characteristics of chaplaincy

For Chris, what characterises the chaplaincy role specifically is that it is located within the social structures of the farming community rather than within those of the church. Chris sees her role as immersing herself in the farming context in order to be alongside people in the midst of their daily experience of life: 'the only chapel that I've got is the tea room at the farmer's market.' Although some farmers do attend church, most of the people she works with as a chaplain do not. She is only able to engage with this group of people because she has a mandate as Rural Officer to work across parish boundaries and so is able to engage with farming networks and to be present where farmers live and associate. In other words, she is able to be where they are rather than expecting them to come to where the church is located.

This relates to Chris's perception that the chaplaincy role affords a greater degree of freedom than the parish role to engage with the everyday lives of people and to respond flexibly to situations because 'we're not hide-bound in a structure.' In the parish, there are structures that have to be worked within and set duties that have to be undertaken such as meetings and the taking of set services but in the chaplaincy, 'you go with the flow ... you go where you're led almost.' Chris found it hard to describe the main components of her role describing it as 'like getting hold of a piece of jelly' because she never knew what she was going to meet in the work or how she might be required to respond. Chaplaincy is seen as being much more like improvisation than the recital of a specified and rehearsed repertoire and as therefore requiring particular attitudes, qualities, experience and skills.

In this role, engagement is continuously shaped by the people or situation with which the chaplain is involved. Chris reflects that: 'It's not like a parish role where you've got set things which you do ... you are there for people without having a specific agenda or role or pattern of anything.' She remarks how being designated a chaplain 'gives me a lot of freedom to do what I love to do with a sort of a label on it' and concludes that the distinctiveness of the work resides in the fact that 'it hasn't got a distinctive role or pattern.' Whilst Chris enjoys this freedom and the entrepreneurial opportunities that the work brings, it also brings challenges. It challenges her constantly to discern and grasp opportunities for engagement and at a deeper level it challenges her to work in faith and trust that her Christian presence and witness are fruitful without necessarily knowing how. Chris points to this hidden apophatic dimension of the work when she says: 'you don't quite know what you're doing, and you don't quite know what seeds you're sowing ...and you don't know what they're going to grow into.' She sees this as one of the main challenges of this genre of ministry:

'you don't always know whether you're doing any good or not, a lot of it is hanging around listening to people and talking a little bit and its only by the spin-offs from then you realise that your chaplaincy – all chaplaincy work I think - does have a role.'

Within this particular context Chris has a multivalent identity as parish priest, diocesan officer, chaplain and farmer. She is skilled at utilising these different identities and at moving across different cultural milieus in order to minister appropriately in a given situation. Working as a chaplain outside church structures and networks and to a large extent with people who are not familiar with church culture or with the Christian tradition requires different gifts and skills to those required when working within church structures. However, Chris has had no training for the chaplaincy work. Her expertise, born of experience, remains largely unexamined and unarticulated and she could not envisage any training being appropriate to the work: 'I think mainly because I've always farmed and I've had a faith and (pause) it's just grown out of that ... I think it would be difficult to have any training'. The role is

perceived as being instinctive and there is no context in which implicit knowledge and skills can be explicated and shared with others so that practice can be developed more intentionally. This also means that there is no explicit narrative about chaplaincy that can represent the work to others at a strategic or policy level.

Chaplaincy and the mission of the church

The chaplain is understood by Chris to be a representative Christian person and she decided therefore to wear a clerical collar in her chaplaincy work as a sign of this identity. She reflected that because she wears a collar, people expect her to be 'quite theological' but because most of the livestock farmers know her as a farmer first and foremost they, 'see me as more of a practical person which gives them the security to open up.' Although her different identities contribute to her ministry, she is present explicitly as a Christian minister and she understands the chaplaincy work as part of the mission of the church. However, in the interview Chris was careful to describe what she meant by mission. She was clear that it's 'a different mission to getting bums on pews'. In the chaplaincy work, 'It's bringing God into people's lives at a time when they are vulnerable without ramming it down their throats...it's bringing the understanding of God into their problems by what I say or do'.

Because Chris understands the context from the inside, she also understands that in order to engage with people in this context, she needs to communicate 'the understanding of God' in a language, both word and deed, appropriate to the context. Therefore the theological underpinning to the work is often not articulated explicitly in the language of the Christian tradition. Chris quotes St. Francis in support of her approach, 'Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words.' She understands that being able to engage with people in their daily lives depends on building relationships of trust reflecting that, 'it's the being alongside people and being with them so that you understand their problems.' Mission is here characterised as 'being alongside' people in their daily lives, immersed in the context, listening and seeking to understand and discern where God might be at work in people's lives in order to be able to respond in a way which

bears witness to Christ and may contribute to human flourishing and so to the flourishing of the Kingdom of God.

This means that the language and articulation of faith and the Christian tradition often remains implicit. The main context in which theological language is used explicitly is the occasional offices of baptisms, weddings and funerals. Because most of the people Chris works with are not church-goers, she is 'very cautious' about offering to pray for or with people, recognising that this may not be helpful to some people who have little or no connection with the Christian tradition.

Nevertheless, a theological undercurrent runs throughout the work even if it rarely comes to the surface. For example, when she goes to the farmer's merchant to buy food for her dog, 'I have conversations there which are theological but the person that I'm talking to doesn't know that they're having a theological conversation with me.' Ordinary everyday encounters are shaped by the theological understandings that Chris brings to them. Creation is understood as the main theological theme underpinning the work, a theme which naturally resonates with the fact that farmers too are working with Creation. Chris makes the connection by saying:

'and when you see new life born every Spring ... then you can't help but be conscious of theology, of Creation, and most farmers would never in a million years articulate that but they're doing it ... it's not something that you can put into words but it happens.'

This links back to the hidden dimension of this ministry that Chris talks about in the interview transcript in terms of the agricultural metaphor of sowing seeds without knowing what they will grow into. We do not know what fruit our words, actions and presence will bear, 'you don't quite know what you're doing, and you don't quite know what seeds you're sowing – to use an agricultural term (laughs) – and you don't know what they're going to grow into.' The examples Chris cites are of talking to people who unexpectedly refer to some words she used at a funeral a couple of years previously or the

farmer who was not 'a man of faith' who contacted her to ask her to go and say prayers to help the situation because he felt that there was 'something evil on his farm.' These things can only happen because of the relational trust and respect that has been built. Most of the time, mission 'bears the essential character of implicit gracious gift' (Slater 2011b, p.10) or as Chris describes it, 'It's always an unspoken ... gift of faith that hopefully I might be able to bring into a situation.'

The Case Study Story

The description of this case shows how, through the exercise of different secular and church roles, a minister who is embedded in the farming and rural context has been able to discern the need for an opportunity to establish an Agricultural Chaplaincy role. This role enables her to come alongside farmers as a representative Christian person to offer support and pastoral care. It shows how the role was developed and is sustained as an individual personal initiative in response to a perceived need rather than having a recognised strategic place within the church organisation or the institutional narratives of ministry. It shows how comprehensive and complex Chris's involvement in the context is and describes the significant amount of overlap between the roles that she occupies and the consequent blurring of boundaries. Because the involvement in the community is comprehensive, there has been no imperative to delineate what the narrative for chaplaincy is in this context.

The lack of delineation is reflected in the fact that there is no role description for the work and no hours specified in which it is to be undertaken. This means that in terms of the church as an organisation, the chaplaincy role cannot be represented and hence the lack of a strategic or organisational presence. The hidden nature of the chaplaincy is also underscored by the fact that there has been no specific training for the post and the post holder does not envisage that training for it would be possible. As a consequence, practice remains within the parameters of individual experience. There is no context in which that experience can be explicated and shared with others in a way which could develop and refresh practice and enable ways to be found

of describing the work so that it can be represented to others and developed more intentionally.

The chaplaincy role gives Chris the freedom to work outside church structures and across parish boundaries, something that it would be impossible to do as a parish priest. Chris is a highly respected Christian presence within the farming community and she herself values highly the chaplaincy work as part of the mission of the wider church. However, the chaplaincy role theoretically occupies only one third of her time, the traditional paradigm of parish ministry remains dominant and its demands on her time take precedence over the chaplaincy work.

Chapter Five

Case Study Two: The development of Chaplaincy roles within a town centre team ministry

Chaplaincy development within the team strategy for mission

The context for this case study is a large Anglican Team Ministry which covers an ethnically diverse town of about 93,300 people. According to the 2011 census (Office for National Statistics, 2012), the three largest ethnic minorities in the district are: Asian/Asian British: Pakistani (7.6%); White: Other White (4.4%); Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group (2.8%). There are six Anglican churches in the team with different theological emphases, all seeking to engage with the complex plural context in which they now find themselves set. The locality covered by the team includes areas of deprivation as well as more affluent neighbourhoods. The whole team includes a wide variety of ordained and lay ministers including, among others, Ordained Local Ministers, Youth Workers, a Pioneer Minister, Readers and Pastoral Workers. The Team Rector is based at the largest church located in the centre of the town surrounded by large retail centres and drawing its congregation from the surrounding area. Within the team there is a 'mixed economy' (The Archbishops' Council 2004, p.xi) of church life and it is within this diverse missional, ministerial, ecclesiological, religious and cultural mix that chaplaincy roles have been developed. I will begin by describing the Team Rector's perspective on the place of chaplaincy within the team mission strategy before describing the perspectives of practising chaplains.

Paul, the Team Rector, traces one impetus behind the development of chaplaincy roles within the team to a prayer initiative that began over twenty years previously. Several members of the congregation contracted together to pray every Saturday morning for the town and for the church to make connections with people in the town. He sees this initiative as having born fruit in recent years and chaplaincy as having played a key part in that flourishing. This missional intention to make connections with people beyond the church walls and to find ways of engaging with them in the midst of

everyday life is key to the strategy for the team that Paul describes and to his view of chaplaincy within that.

The other important impetus cited is the publication of the Church of England report *Mission-shaped church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* (The Archbishops' Council, 2004) which he sees as having given him a framework to work from in developing a team strategy. He places that work in the context of what he understands to be the missional character of the Christian faith:

‘Christians need to feel sent, I mean we’re a missional religion: God sends and I think we need to feel sent and in a sense, what I’m saying about the strategic work of chaplaincy and the team is that we were crystallising that sent-ness ... Chaplaincy plays to that because it has a significant pastoral focus but also a missional focus too – going out and sharing the love of God and the good news of Jesus Christ with the people around.’

Chaplaincy is seen as a way of engaging missionally with the town and people beyond the walls of the church and beyond ‘ordinary parish life’. The development of various models of chaplaincy is seen as fitting into that context. Paul thinks that when he took up the post there needed to be a culture change in church life in the town centre from what he saw as a fairly passive role to a more active, engaged one. He conceptualises this shift in terms of needing to move from the Benedictine to the Franciscan model of engagement. He sees the Benedictine model of offering hospitality and inviting people to ‘come and join us’ as being important and one with which Anglicans are comfortable but that, ‘they haven’t been quite so comfortable with that peripatetic Franciscan “let’s go over there and start praying and see what happens” and I think we are more Franciscan now so the two traditions work together.’

Paul saw that what was needed was not just a ‘benign pastoral presence’ in the community but an active engagement with local businesses and

community initiatives. The decision was therefore made to appoint a Community Missioner to work in the town centre. That work has developed in various ways over recent years so that there is now engagement with the police service through chaplaincy and with local shopkeepers and retail managers through the town centre chaplaincy team.

Paul sees this shift in culture as having ‘unquestionably’ impacted on local church life and on the way that the congregations now see their ministry. This is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that several of the team churches now provide team members for the various ministries such as the town centre chaplaincy. In Paul’s view of chaplaincy, making connections with people *beyond* ordinary parish life, people who will probably never attend church, is a key facet of the chaplaincy work whereas in parish ministry, most time is spent making connections with people *through* parish life.

Paul believes that the intention of chaplaincy is to be a distinctive Christian presence in a particular context, enabling people in their daily work and life whether or not they are Christians. This is seen as a way of living out authentic discipleship, demonstrating to people outside the church community that ‘what we say about ourselves is lived out incarnationally, that we actually do go out and show people the love of God in Christ where they are at work and to affirm that work that they do.’ Whilst members of congregations obviously work in many contexts, the distinctive thing about chaplaincy is that ‘it’s a visible sense of that presence’, part of an ‘incarnate church’, ‘God just didn’t give us the idea of incarnation He actually sent his Son to demonstrate it and in a sense, that’s what chaplaincy is living out.’ Intentionality is seen as being fundamental to being a chaplain, the key question being ‘What are we for?’ Chaplains are understood as a ‘distinctive Christian presence’ in non-church contexts where Paul suggests that ‘people just sense that you stand there for God and there’s something quite profound about that in people’s lives.’

Drawing on his own experience as a former part-time hospital chaplain, Paul reflects on how a chaplain's relationship with a context or institution is different to that of a parish priest who may visit from outside. For example, although when a parish priest visits a hospital she may be seen to do what a chaplain would do, a chaplain knows the context inside out, has built relationships across the institution and the people who work there relate to the chaplain in a particular way, 'and most would acknowledge that they have a very real right to be working alongside them as a colleague.' This commitment to the context and the capacity to work alongside colleagues is seen as an important part of the work.

However, this embeddedness in a context raises the question of the relationship both with the context and with the church. Paul is aware that there may be significant tensions here and his understanding of this has influenced the approach to making chaplaincy appointments:

'I think one of the great (pause) tensions for all parish clergy is we can end up running the show and forgetting that we're also called to be out in the world but I think chaplaincy ... faces the reverse tension...you can see a situation where you could actually become almost comfortable being out in the world and so resistant to what the church is for and about that you live your life entirely on the margins.'

In the light of this, he considers it important to appoint:

'people who have a very distinct sense of calling to a missional chaplaincy type role but equally who value the life of the church and want to actually have some significant part in the worshipping life of the community and having a spiritual base themselves.'

This rationale for appointments lies behind the fact that the two people in the team with lead roles in chaplaincy, the Town Centre Lead Chaplain, and missional work, Community Missioner and Police Chaplain, are both also Team Vicars. Paul sees it as important that they are of incumbent status,

‘we’ve given the incipient authority to the role by actually making them priests of incumbent status within the team.’ The vision is that they should play a full part in the life of the team chapter as well as having a ‘spiritual base’ in a church within the team. In this view, chaplains are seen as needing to be embedded in a church context in order for their roles to have authority within the team.

Chaplaincy practice within the team

The study looked at five specific chaplaincy roles that have been developed within the team mission strategy: Lead Town Centre Chaplain, Community Missioner and Police Chaplain; Supermarket Chaplain; Chaplain to a charity for homeless people; YMCA Chaplain. I will consider each of these roles in turn.

Lead Town Centre Chaplain

The initial idea for this chaplaincy came from an inter-denominational meeting of Churches Together in the town which discussed how to have a Christian presence in the retail centre given that ‘the people don’t come into the churches.’ Recognising that there was a substantial Muslim population, it was felt that, ‘we needed to be out there, be with the people, regardless of creed or colour’. The group prayed about the situation, the idea of appointing a chaplain took shape and the hope is that people of different faiths will eventually join the chaplaincy team. When there was an interregnum in a small parish in the team, where a third of the parish is Muslim, the decision was taken to appoint someone for two days as Town Centre Chaplain and the rest as Team Vicar.

Kate was appointed to the roles and as Lead Chaplain she coordinates a team of ten volunteer chaplains who each work two hours a week. She also works and builds relationships with managers of two retail centres, the town centre management, Shopmobility which facilitates public access and the police. Volunteer chaplains are given their own area of operation so that they can build up relationships with shop keepers. Kate says, ‘the idea is that the chaplaincy is there to support and walk alongside as a listening

friend all who work in the shops, whatever denomination, whatever faith they are’.

The volunteer chaplains have to be nominated by their church leader. They go out with various chaplains and with Kate. Once they are sure they would like to do the work, they attend two or three training sessions covering areas such as body language, listening skills, making referrals, what it means to be a chaplain and a bible study. At the end of the training they go out with a chaplain again before going out on their own. The work is supported by a team of Trustees drawn from local churches and Shopmobility which meets regularly. There is also an Annual General Meeting and the chaplains produce an annual report which is widely distributed along with information leaflets about the service for people in the shops and leaflets for people enquiring about becoming a chaplain. In terms of her own support, Kate belongs to a diocesan organisation that supports ministry within the workplace and she goes to any relevant training for which she can use the diocesan Continuing Ministerial Education grant. She perceives that she has excellent support from the Trustees and three of them meet with her regularly. In this sense, the work is well resourced.

Having been an RE teacher, Kate herself began by being a school chaplain. Before she went through the selection process for ministry, she knew that she wanted to be a chaplain rather than a parish priest. It seemed to her the appropriate thing to do because she believed at the time, and still believes, that ‘many people don’t go into churches any more.’ Kate recognises that for many people church is an alien culture and environment and therefore they never ‘take the plunge’. She identifies ‘a very big gap’ between the ‘unchurched’ who have never had a relationship with the church and the ‘dechurched’ who no longer have a relationship and those who are worshipers. She sees chaplaincy as one of the ways to bridge that gap and believes that ‘we have to get out there and show them that the church is different’. The model she cites for this are the stories of Jesus being out and about with people. Kate identifies this as her own motivation for the work. However, she recognises that a chaplain in the retail park is ‘a guest on their

ground', invited in by the management team and not there to evangelise, a role which is left to others already working in the town centre.

Kate understands chaplaincy as being part of mission because 'you're sent out' but it is also something more, 'it's actually showing the compassion of Christ ... in a way that is not always seen in a church setting'. It is seen as a necessary way of taking out the gospel message 'because people don't come into the churches any more', a way of walking with people who do not know the stories of Jesus and have no connection with the church, 'but something that the chaplain does or says might spark an interest that the chaplain themselves would never see and that allows them to feel well, church can't be that bad, I'm going to give it a go.'

For Kate, 'chaplaincy is being out there with people, wherever they are, and I think that's the difference to being in a church.' Her engagement with individuals is characterised as walking alongside as a 'listening friend'. She is aware that along with this pastoral availability comes the potential for deep encounters as people are willing to share things when in a church setting it would perhaps 'take a couple of years to break down the barriers' before they would be willing to do that. On the streets it happens because 'you're on *their* turf, you're on their territory, they're more relaxed and you're seen as a friend'.

In the interview Kate spoke of the different perceptions and expectations people had of her in her different roles. She is aware that as a chaplain, she doesn't have church structures and liturgical roles to work within so:

'it's very much your personality that's out there. They have their expectations but expectations of you perhaps as a person and not as a priest or a chaplain and they are ... perhaps more accepting of what you give them because they don't have the same expectations.'

Kate reflected that unlike in parish ministry where there are certain things you have to do, this is not the case in chaplaincy which is characterised by a

much more fluid, entrepreneurial response predicated on the capacity to meet people where they are. Kate sees the aim of the work as being 'to have a Christian presence in that place.' In practice, this means that Kate often visits coffee shops where she finds herself engaged in pastoral conversations as well as visiting the range of shops on her 'beat' and the lap dancing club. There are days when the shops are busy and conversations are few and Kate wonders what she's done, 'but you've been there and that's the main thing'. She understands that the challenge of the work at such times is to faithfulness so that over time, the chaplaincy presence becomes recognised.

Kate talks about this being the case not only in relation to the town centre but also in relation to the churches. When she was a school chaplain in a previous diocese she felt that her church colleagues did not accept her as 'a proper priest'. In her present role, it has been a challenge to convince colleagues that the work is worthwhile given that the impact is not measurable in institutional terms. She perceives that support from colleagues has grown as chaplaincy has become more recognised as part of the economy of church life in the town but she still thinks the church is very slow to recognise the value of chaplaincy other than in hospitals. This is mirrored in her own parish where she finds tying together the two roles difficult and her perception is that people in the parish think that the two roles don't sit well together, 'they think they should have a priest to themselves.' This has led her to wonder if there would be more opportunity in the town centre if there was a full-time chaplain and to feel that 'the way ahead for the church lies in more investment in the chaplaincy roles, right across the board'.

Community Missioner and Police Chaplain

Jenny identifies the original impetus behind her role as the recognition by the parish that although the church was in the market place, 'there was still a considerable gap between what they were doing and what they could do.' The previous rector but one had a passion for 'going out on the street and meeting people where they were' and the parish did not want this vision for

missional engagement to be lost. They wanted to employ someone to go beyond 'the traditional boundaries of the church to engage with the town on a social network basis.' Jenny was employed as someone who was entrepreneurial, happy to 'get out there' on the streets, be seen and to build relationships across the town. She is also a Team Vicar. In her community-based role she was given carte blanche to develop the work. As relationships grew so did opportunities for engagement such as involvement with council workers' Christians at Work group. Her main method though was 'just walking around in my collar' which prompted people to start conversations and to ask questions. Jenny was licensed for seven years and after a while she realised that 'the job was much bigger than one person.' She developed the vision for a Town Centre Chaplaincy in order to meet the need that she uncovered.

Because they have similar ministries, Jenny, the Town Centre Chaplain and the Town Evangelist work together and support each other as it is difficult to find like-minded people, 'because chaplaincy is very often looked down upon'. Whilst the team chapter meets once a month, mostly people get on with their own work and she imagines her relationship with church colleagues as 'like a fly dipping ... dipping down and touching the water and then flying off again'. However, certain colleagues do recognise and respect the distinctive nature and value of her work and when she became Team Vicar concern was expressed that she was 'possibly going to be spoiled by conventional ministry'. Jenny doesn't think that this has happened but she is clear that her ministry will always be community-based and that she does not want to become a 'church-based vicar'.

Her real concern is that there should be a distinctive Christian presence at the heart of the community, available to people in their ordinary everyday lives. Jenny cites the example of Jesus going out to be with people where they lived and worked and sees the vocation of the church as following that example. The vocation is to expose ourselves to risky situations, to enter into genuine dialogue with people and potentially, 'to have *our* stereotypes bowled over and also people on the street, to have *their* stereotypes bowled

over as well.’ Community-based ministry is seen as having a role of ‘calling the church to account’, challenging church based ministers to go to where people are rather than staying in church buildings. This model of engagement is based on the conviction that ‘the sacred centre is wherever God is’ and as God is everywhere, our prayer must ask, ‘Where do you want us to be?’ and then we must be prepared to follow where God leads. Jenny believes that ministers need to be prepared to ‘live the grey areas of life’ such as the conversations at the bus stop, ‘the in between bits where ministry actually can happen.’ She reflects that only if Christians are prepared to get alongside people, to listen, will they be able to discern where God might be at work in people’s lives and to bear witness to their faith. In Jenny’s perception, ‘there is a lot of faith and spirituality out there’ and she sees her role as gently offering some shape and substance to that and to ‘speak for the truth which is within us.’

The essential things, she believes, are to listen carefully and to underpin action with a well thought out theology. For Jenny, the theology derives from Jesus’ example of getting out to meet people and it has to be content with mobility. She believes that the church needs to take courage from this and not be afraid of getting ‘up close and personal’ with people. It needs to become less introverted and able to be ‘invigorated by a fairly foreign environment.’ This view is summed up in Jenny’s observation that, ‘essentially it’s about a God who goes... it’s never really about our mission, it’s about God’s mission expressed through us.’

Jenny reflects that her role as a Police Chaplain is different in that there she is invited into the institution and has the sanction of the hierarchy. In this role, she is accountable to the police, has access at every level of the institution and is expected to be a ‘critical friend’ who will challenge behaviour as well as provide pastoral support. She believes that what counts is authentic discipleship which leads people to want to ask questions and that both these roles require the living out of faith in the public square. For Jenny, ‘it’s about challenging the private, public, personal boundary; it’s about asserting the sovereignty of God in any situation; it’s about setting up

mission as life, not just something we do on occasion.’ In this sense, chaplains are very much public theologians.

Chaplaincy within a charity for homeless people

Stuart is a Team Vicar who has been involved with this Christian charity since its inception in 2006 and who is currently a Trustee. One of the struggles for the organisation has been to understand how the faith which motivated the work in the first place remains integrated in the organisation as it develops. Because he was ordained and integral to the organisation, Stuart eventually became chaplain but it was not until he became a Team Vicar and had to step back from involvement in the charity that he has had time to reflect on the role. He has come to the conclusion that there is a choice to make; either to detach himself from current involvement in the organisation in order to be chaplain or for him to continue as a Trustee and to advertise for, and appoint, a separate chaplain.

This perceived choice arises out of Stuart’s growing understanding of chaplaincy. He believes that the chaplain is there for everybody attached to the organisation. It is not church or denomination centred although any chaplain will bring that background as part of who they are. It is open to people of all faiths and to those who don’t espouse a specific faith. Unrestricted by the structures of parish ministry, ‘it is purely about ... the role and ... its then about how different characters perform their chaplaincy within that role.’ The chaplain would be a member of the organisation but would not be the head of it as a minister in a church would be and therefore, ideally, they would be approachable by anyone. Having a chaplain is seen as strengthening the Christian ethos of the organisation, performing a clearly identifiable faith role within a faith organisation. They would be there to look after the spiritual needs of all those involved and whilst they would be part of the structures they would not have an executive role although they might have input into decision-making processes. The aim is for the chaplain to be a distinctive presence at the heart of the organisation. The phrase which sums up the chaplaincy relationship for Stuart is ‘integral but detached.’

Stuart sees the chaplaincy work as being about the intensity of real encounters with people and he sees Jesus as providing the model for this work: 'The model that Jesus gives I think is the model of a chaplain ... meeting people where they were and when the opportunity arose to talk to them about spiritual things'. The distinctive qualities are having the freedom to go out to meet people, seeking to understand people's context and having a focus for ministry which for Jesus is seen as being 'a Kingdom focus.'

Stuart believes chaplaincy to be integral to the mission of the church but that it is a gift or calling to which not everyone is suited. Skills are required to work effectively in non-church contexts including the skill of being able to respond in a spiritual way in such contexts and 'putting that kind of theological framework on the basic stuff of life.'

Supermarket Chaplain

Kim spends two hours twice a month as voluntary chaplain to a supermarket in the parish where she is a self-supporting Ordained Local Minister. She recounts how she felt a personal call to this kind of ministry after hearing a talk called 'Meet on the Street' at a New Wine evangelical Christian gathering. When the supermarket advertised for a chaplain in the local paper she applied and was appointed. The manager had been told to appoint a chaplain but did not know what one was and consequently Kim has no job description or contract. This means that there is no structural embeddedness in the context, no accountability and no organisational rationale for the role. The appointing manager has since left leaving the continuance of the role dependent on the relationship with the next manager. Kim wears her clerical collar in order to signal her distinctive Christian presence and has made herself a badge with 'Chaplain' and her name on it. She feels tensions with the role given that this is a multi-faith context but these are not addressed with the management. Her availability to talk to people is announced every half hour over the loud speaker system and she stands in the foyer in order to be available to anyone who would like to speak with her. Kim sees the main focus of her role as being available for pastoral conversations. This includes conversations with people who attend the

church with whom she does not usually have opportunity to spend quality time because of the number of people who require her attention after a service. This is seen by Kim as fulfilling a valuable pastoral role in the community but she expressed a sense of frustration that there is no real engagement with the role by the management.

Kim sees the role as an extension of her church role, 'It's giving time to say, you folks are valuable, we care about you, the church cares about you ... an extension really of parish work.' The title 'Chaplain' is 'just a name that's been attached to the job' and is not understood to have any specific delineation:

'I just see it as *me* going in there, representative of the Anglican Church, to be there for people to talk to me or not and if I can help them or if I listen to them, that's what I see my role is.'

It is seen as being 'a big part of the mission of the church because if the folks won't come to the church building then the folks have got to go out to where the folks are.' Kim usually emails round to the prayer team at her church before she goes into the supermarket and the congregation and wider ministry team are aware of what she does. This is experienced as supportive along with the conviction that it is where God wants her to be.

YMCA Chaplaincy

The YMCA hostel for single people on the edge of the town used to have a Church Army captain as chaplain. For the past two years the local church has taken on the involvement with a team of about eight lay volunteers who go in on a rota basis. Peter, the vicar, is officially the chaplain but doesn't take a lead role. He sees the work as part of the mission of the church as 'ministry beyond our walls' and the importance of it lies in the opportunities it offers to build 'relationships between Christian and non-Christian as the basis for ministry.' The volunteers don't have any particular training or support because 'they're all pretty experienced Christians'. The main involvement is running a games evening once a week as the basis of

building relationships and trust. Occasionally residents go to church events and the church is establishing a pioneer congregation which they hope will establish links with the YMCA. Peter would like to see more links with the Christian faith as a next stage of involvement.

The chaplaincy is seen as being there for the residents only and there is no substantial engagement with the staff or management. The work is only referred to as 'chaplaincy' within the YMCA 'because I think that's how they see things' but 'in church it's just seen as part of the work.' Although Peter is nominally chaplain, he says, 'I don't do chaplain things, whatever those might be.' There is no job description for the role but the fact they are still welcome leads Peter to assume that YMCA are happy with their involvement. The church has recently appointed a pioneer minister and he hopes to develop his role in the YMCA by visiting during the day. The church wants to encourage people to attend a pioneer service, 'a kind of Fresh Expression in the pub'. It already has an ecclesiological framework for its thinking in what it calls Discipleship in Action, 'communities based in particular locations around the parish.' The hope is that the work at the YMCA will inform how they go about developing more of these communities.

The case study story

The description of this geographical case study shows how a town centre team ministry has developed chaplaincy roles as part of an intentional strategy for missional engagement with the community in which it is set. The Team Rector articulates a theology of mission that underpins the team strategy and an understanding of the role of chaplaincy within that. However there is a wide variety of chaplaincy practice in the team and the chaplains articulate and enact different understandings of what chaplaincy is and of how it relates to parish roles and to the mission and ministry of the church.

Chapter Six

Case Study Three: The development of chaplaincy roles within a market town ecumenical Project

Chaplaincy development within the Project strategy for mission

The context for this case study is the creation of an ecumenical Project as a missional response to the challenge of changing social and ecclesial realities. In the light of dwindling congregations and diocesan reorganisation requiring a reduction in numbers of full-time stipendiary clergy, the churches in the town understood that they needed to look afresh at how they could most effectively communicate the gospel in that context. In the light of the Anglican Methodist Covenant of 2002, the main Anglican churches of the three parishes in the town came together with the Methodist Church to discern the way forward. The result was the amalgamation of the three parishes into one large parish and in 2009 a covenant was signed with the Methodist Church in a joint commitment to mission and ministry in the area.

The strategic thinking behind this development was set out in a report for consultation called, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' (Churches Working Group, 2008). The main mission benefits of shared working are detailed as: churches being able to do more together than on their own; releasing time, energy, talents and resources by pooling resources including both people and money; giving church representatives a stronger and more authentic voice in the community because they would not be speaking on behalf of one church but many; strengthening the Christian witness by coming together in mission with the Methodist Church with one voice. The missional vision for the churches is that they are called not just to support the faithful few and 'to live in splendid isolation, but to be involved in the midst of this needy world, working alongside and with all people' (Churches Working Group 2008, p.6).

The new structures and governance that this reorganisation implies enabled the planning of new shared mission initiatives: a full time worker with children and young people; a shared administrative post; a part-time chaplain to the

Further Education (FE) College; and a part-time Chaplain to Older People working with residential and nursing homes and with older people in the community. It was envisaged that more chaplaincy roles could develop as the covenant relationship matured and chaplaincy to large retail businesses is given as an example. What is clear is that from the inception of the Project, chaplaincy roles have been understood as a key element in the desire of the churches to better serve the mission of God in the world. I will now describe how this vision for the work is being realised in practice from the perspectives of key members of the Project.

The Vicar

John, one of the main architects of the reorganisation, described to me how the expectation that ministers in a small market town will be involved in a large variety of things meant that they developed a variety of skills but that they had little opportunity to fully develop one aspect of the work. It was decided that it would make more sense for individuals to concentrate on key areas of church life rather than everybody trying to do everything. This led to the idea of clergy having 'functional responsibilities', such as education and adult discipleship, rather than responsibilities for a particular building and congregations. This in turn meant a change in church responsibilities so that instead of dealing solely with one building, a minister would be responsible for particular congregations perhaps in different church buildings.

This concept established a principle of specialisation which in turn raised the question of how far to go. For example, a focus on education entailed demands from several primary and secondary schools and a FE college with 2000 plus students. Given these demands, to develop worthwhile work in the college whilst being a parish minister is 'virtually impossible' raising the question of the best way to work in the college. In his own perception, John had done that not very well for four years because he did not have adequate time. At this point John had discussions with the college about how someone from the church might best work with them. It became apparent that a partnership would only be successful if the person from the church was sufficiently part of the college structure so that everyone knew them and

they knew what was going on in the college community. This led to the idea that the way forward was for the college and the church to jointly sponsor someone. It was agreed that for a trial three year period the college and the church would each pay half of the funding for one day a week of term-time chaplaincy. John sees this development as the movement from one minister having the main responsibility for education and discipleship to them devolving part of that responsibility to someone who could spend more time in a particular context. The logic is that, 'you cannot effectively do it sometimes unless you are part of the structure you're trying to work alongside and support.' He sees the same logic relating to the appointment of the Chaplain to Older People:

'So the chaplaincy initiatives come out of the first decision that there needed to be functional responsibilities ... within a team rather than everybody trying to do everything and the location of some of the posts outside of the church structure relates to an assessment of the practicalities of actually doing it.'

The commitment to missional outreach into the community, where mission is understood as 'reaching out and sharing the good news of the gospel', is seen as a driver for considering chaplaincy initiatives. Chaplaincy is seen as important because it enables the church to step into key areas of the life of the town where it felt it needed to make more of an input. John identifies the underlying theology as being that, 'God is concerned about everybody and those of us who are called are called to be concerned about everybody.' It is this principle which 'feeds the ecclesiology which then feeds looking for an approach that's going to do that.' He does not see chaplaincy as being the only answer or as always being the answer, 'but at a particular point in time it seemed to fit with what we wanted to do'. The distinctive thing about it is that, 'you're specialising on one aspect of community life and often in a limited number of geographical locations or types of people.' Chaplaincy work brings to the team the ability to raise issues about God's purposes in secular organisations which would otherwise be 'resistant to the casual approach of the parish priest', enabling the church 'to know enough about

our neighbour in order to open meaningful conversation ... in a way that might improve things.’ This requires the investment of time in order to build relationships and trust.

However, from the point of view of the church structures, these initiatives can be problematic, ‘because once you set up something outside of the church structure, in a sense you lose partial control of it’. The time pressure on clergy also means that unless a proactive management approach is taken with specific times set for meeting it is easy to lose touch with chaplains:

‘So, I think chaplaincy is part of mission but it’s a dangerous part of mission unless you are in a position to really manage it and integrate it with what you’re actually doing and that is difficult.’

John knows how tempting it can be to set something going and hope for the best especially if reports of the work are appreciative. He believes that supervision is required in order to reflect on what is being done and how effective it is being. Both the chaplains in the Project are line managed by clergy with the FE Chaplain also having a line manager in the college. Questions of accountability go hand in hand with questions of funding; although the two main chaplaincy posts are part funded by external bodies, they are also resourced by the churches. This raises for the Project the challenging issue of the communication and integration of chaplaincy roles with the wider life of the churches.

At a practical level, John observed that although a lot of effort is put into keeping congregations informed about the work, many people don’t take up the information and remain uninformed. This makes it difficult to address issues about the ways in which congregations may perceive chaplains; are they seen as doing the work for them and so alleviating them of any responsibility or do the chaplains try to link congregations with the work so that they are seen as encouraging the work? The strategic reorganisation is complicated and change is difficult so finding effective ways of communicating is challenging. John notes that when there is pressure on

resources and congregations are asked what they want, 'they always say clergy.' He sees this as a somewhat selfish attitude; asking for someone to look after them means that mission takes second place and chaplaincy is easy to cut, 'So we need to help the congregation understand what we're doing and buy into it or else they won't fund people who on the face of it aren't doing anything directly for them.' This applies not only at the local level but also centrally where there is a recent history of chaplaincy posts being cut, 'So you do require vision at the real centre as to what you're actually doing. You continually have to recreate that vision if you're going to maintain it.' Chaplaincy thus presents many challenges to the churches:

'it challenges them to take mission seriously; it challenges them to think of them working within other people's structures; it challenges them to make the effort to understand what's going on; and it challenges them to fund something that they may not get any direct returns from ... So it is a challenge to congregations to have that level of vision, to look outward rather than inward ... and I think that's a big ask really.'

The new structures and ways of working require active management and John reflects that clergy who have an overview of such a project need to be properly trained, resourced and supported by bishops who understand the vision. He is aware that the demands of the role mean that there is a tension between management and leadership and traditional aspects of the clergy role such as pastoral care may not receive as much attention as before. He believes that what is needed are people who can 'take the big view' of what's going on and of what the church is doing in terms of mission. There needs to be 'a serious engagement with individual communities' and that involves looking at structures and ways of working.

Older People's Chaplain

Clare is technically employed by the Methodist Church for twenty hours a week and the post is part funded by a charity that has provided tapered funding in order to establish the post. This means that the churches will

eventually need to make a resource decision about continued funding. Clare is an Anglican Reader who is line managed by the Methodist minister in the Project. Since there is a significant and growing population of older people in the town, this was identified as a locus of ministerial need during the process of reorganisation to which the establishment of this post was a response. Clare is involved with four care homes providing a mixture of nursing, residential and specialist dementia care. She is also in touch with seven or eight groups of sheltered accommodation and will see people in their own homes by invitation or appropriate referral.

Clare was prompted to apply for the post in the light of her personal experience of having parents in a care home whom she recognised could have benefited from having someone outside the family to talk to about their spiritual needs. She relished the opportunity to forge this role in the way that she wished and began by getting to know key people and voluntary groups in the community along with the managers of the care homes. The intention was 'to foster trust and confidence in me as a person who they were happy to allow to have free access.' This has provided the foundation on which her work has been built.

Clare sees relationship building as key to the development of the role not just with the care community but across the church community as well. She is clear that she goes 'very much as a representative of the congregations' and the work is supported by a small group of lay people. Although the chaplaincy role is a specialist role with a clear focus on ministry with one section of the community, Clare also sees it as a collaborative role, stating that, 'I have come to supplement what the clergy were already doing and continue to do.' Clare works together with the clergy to provide services within the homes and she regularly attends relevant parts of team meetings. She preaches sometimes and had done a 'celebration of age' service on the occasion of someone's seventieth birthday, which led on to an annual 'In Celebration of Age' service for the whole community. She is thus involved in the liturgy of the parish.

Clare's professional background is journalism so she is very aware of the importance of good communication and of the need to represent the work to others effectively. She has produced a DVD about her work to explain what is distinctive about this form of chaplaincy and 'in order to help other people foster their own vocations in ministry to older people.' Although only eighteen months into the role at the time of interview, she was keen to develop a small group of lay people to work alongside her and looks out for people who might be encouraged to test their own vocation to the work.

The specialist nature of the role means that she has built up knowledge, networks, relationships, trust and expertise in this area in a way that parish clergy do not have time to do. This can function as a resource in the churches. This includes locating appropriate training for herself given that there is no specified training. The fact that she does not have the bureaucratic and administrative workload of a parish minister, 'frees me to go where I identify the needs.' Although she does have the structure of key services that she takes, and there are administrative tasks and records to keep, 'what's distinctive about being a chaplain is that I can respond to needs very quickly.' This freedom to encounter and respond to people in the midst of daily life is deemed precious and distinctive of chaplaincy:

'in many ways I feel that as a chaplain you're liberated to carry out your mission in a way which ... is well it's exciting and ... so often I find it's to the envy of my colleagues who are parish priests who sometimes look at that and say, "Oh, that's why I went into ministry but I seem to have been side-lined into so many other aspects of it; fundraising, looking after the structure of a building.'"

Clare sees the role as being for everyone, whether or not they espouse a religious faith, and the virtue of being a lay person that she can come alongside people without being perceived as judgemental whereas 'sometimes clergy you know, with a dog collar and robes, can be perceived as somewhat judgemental.' Recognising that in most cases this is an unfair perception, nevertheless:

‘the beauty is that I can come and meet people exactly where they are and I seek to be completely non-judgemental. And if a conversation never mentions God that’s fine, it’s about ministering to the total person wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.’

She may be ‘church’ for some people who have lost touch with their churchgoing history and for others ‘just a friendly face’ but:

‘I personally am going feeling that I’m being sent by the congregation but that Christ goes before me and that I’m there to embody that sense of love and trust and ...easy communication with somebody, it’s as simple as that.’

This is definitely seen by Clare as part of the mission of the church at a time when there is ‘so much despair and lack of hope and confidence’ and the church forgets ‘the really important priorities.’

‘And the important priority it seems to me is to remind people that they are loved by God and that they are cared for and cared about by their Creator and by other people from the cradle to the grave and beyond.’

Clare likes the definition of a chaplain ‘that it’s someone who keeps the rumour of God alive’.

In the care homes, Clare regards herself as being there for the whole institution including residents, relatives and staff as well as having a representative role within the wider community as ‘a point of contact to talk about the issues that are relevant to older age.’ She sees part of her remit to be an advocate for older people, ‘and I think there is a very interesting role to be developed too about how we prepare for our own older age.’

Clare believes that the qualities needed for the role include empathic listening and the capacity to give full attention, focusing on the other’s ‘whole

wellbeing'. The chaplain also needs to have thought through their own spirituality and to have worked through the losses in their own life. Dealing repeatedly with loss and sadness highlights the importance of good support and supervision ensuring that appropriate boundaries are kept and that time for replenishment is taken. Clare thinks that chaplaincy work also calls for 'slightly different personality traits' to parish clergy, 'a chaplain has to be someone who has that individual drive and personality to ... resource their own work...you've got no one necessarily cracking a whip'.

Clare ends her interview by saying that she came to the role feeling that being a chaplain is something to be proud of and that it is 'fine work.' She was shocked to realise that not everyone in the church appreciated the work, especially individuals 'who have quite a lot of power within where the allocation of resources happens, and it shouldn't be like that.'

Methodist Minister and line manager of Older People's Chaplain

Like John his Anglican colleague, Tom locates the rationale for the development of chaplaincy roles as both missional and pragmatic. The Methodist Church 'regrouping for mission' and Anglican diocesan reorganisation posed the question of how the churches in the town could best engage with and serve the community. It seemed obvious from the start that the most effective way for the churches to bear witness to the gospel would be to work together:

'we felt that ... God's Spirit was involved very much in what was happening ... and that we were involved in something which was bigger than us as individuals, bigger than us as individual churches and it was about how could we best minister, mission and serve the community so it wasn't just church based, it went beyond that.'

This focus *ad extra* was the impetus for the developments. Tom stresses the importance of keeping in mind why the reorganisation took place, captured in the phrase 'in order that', 'because if there's no "in order that" then it's a waste of time, just reshaping boundaries'. The particular personalities that

came together and the willingness of churches and individuals to be involved and to 'grasp the bigger picture' meant that change became possible at a certain point in time which Tom sees as 'God's time': people recognised that there was something important and of God in what was being proposed. Tom now thinks chaplaincy is a major contribution that the Project makes to the town and surrounding areas and also that people take the churches more seriously than hitherto because, 'there's something about a bigger dynamic than one church acting alone.'

For those outside the church, this may give the work, 'the weight and authority that one individual church wouldn't have had on its own' but within the churches, the case for the missional focus of the chaplaincy work has had to be made. The perception of chaplaincy as diverting resources from the church into the community has had to be addressed and Tom sees that the Older People's Chaplain has done this effectively by her involvement in church life as well as in the community. Clare is known and seen by people in the care homes and at church lunches and clubs and so they know her and understand her work. People appreciate the role and are prepared to support it because they have had a positive experience of it. Although initially some people may have perceived the appointment as an excuse for ministers to stop visiting older people:

'within a few weeks of the chaplain starting, people were saying, "it's fantastic, she's brilliant, it's working really well", which is why I go back to saying it's because the experience has been so positive, it would be far easier to sell ... another brand of chaplaincy to people who have already seen that it works.'

This raises the issue of how to quantify what is 'successful'. Tom reflects that there are no 'tick boxes' for 'being the person that enables someone to voice their innermost fears' but one could perhaps look at 'signs of the chaplain doing what a chaplain should do.' This might include there being good working relationships between the chaplain and their context, the feedback from people and the work that is able to be done. Another criterion

would be that the organisation sees the position as being important and, if possible, is prepared to resource it to some extent. Tom suggests that in relation to care homes benefits may be seen in terms of lower staff turnover. A chaplain might be able to contribute at management level bringing questions about good practice and staff support, 'So you can bring gospel, Kingdom ethics to that.'

Tom sees the distinctive identity of chaplains as residing in their ability 'to invest the time and the energy and the space in a way that general ministry doesn't allow you to do.' They are representative ministers who are able to become specialists in their field and 'to feed that back into the life of the churches and the Project and the community.' He draws the analogy of chaplains as specialists to whom the parish priest as General Practitioner would refer someone. However, chaplaincy is not just about skills and opportunity, 'there's something about calling: not everybody can be a chaplain.' Tom identifies a difference between 'how you relate to people as a chaplain' and 'how you relate to people as a Methodist minister.' This relates to the capacity to be available to people, to be approachable, to listen and to work in an open and non-judgemental way. What is important is to be open to engage with people where they are in order to have:

'the kind of dialogue and conversation that often is needed. So I think ... you've got to be the kind of person who's not hiding behind ... the formal title or the dog collar, or the role or the liturgy or the paraphernalia that ministry often brings.'

In a culture where many have no connection with a faith community, it's about helping people to find a language in which they can articulate their deepest human experiences and 'accepting people for who they are and not for whom you want them to become. It's about being the yeast and leaven: it's kingdom stuff.' Ultimately for Tom:

'It's about being Christ's presence in the world ... it's about being with the people who are broken, neglected, on the edges on the fringes,

marginalised, misunderstood: it's about being where people are ... It's not about being within the structures of what the church has to offer.'

Chaplaincy is seen as central to the mission of the church. It is mission because a chaplain is a representative person, authorised by and accountable to the church, who goes out to be a presence in the community. However, 'it's also got to be service ... and a whole host of other things.' 'It's mission because it's bringing God and God's Kingdom and God's word and values into wherever people are.'

In Tom's view, the establishment of chaplaincy posts inevitably brings challenges to the churches for it says to people, 'How big is your vision of the Kingdom? How big is your vision of what God is doing? Is God only at work in the life of the church or is God at work in the life of the world?' Chaplains may also bring unforeseen challenges to the life of the church by feedback about pastoral practice. However, a good working relationship between chaplain and church which enables positive feedback to be given and received can facilitate learning and enrich the life of the faith community.

FE College Chaplain

This is a term-time one day a week post joint funded by the college and the churches. The college has about 2000 students and 200 staff. Annie, the chaplain, has a background in teaching and is also part-time curate in the parish. Her line manager in college is the head counsellor in Student Services and she is supervised in the parish by the Associate Vicar. From the church's perspective, the role was developed as a proactive engagement with the college and from the college's perspective it is seen as an important dimension of their Equality and Diversity agenda. In the college there are a small number of Muslim and Buddhist students, a variety of Christian denominations and the majority 'who say that they're not anything.' Both the college and Annie see it as a multi-faith role, 'it is an embracing role of those of all faiths and none; that's how they put it and that's how I see it. So I suppose it's more of a general spirituality, nurturing role encouraging youngsters to explore.' Annie does wear a clerical collar as 'a badge of

office' but she also has a bright orange hoodie with 'College Chaplain' on it. She is transparent about who she is as a person of faith but says that she is happy to engage with anyone.

Underpinning her ministry in college is 'the gospel imperative of caring for folk as Christ did – unconditionally.' She encourages people of different faiths to explore their own beliefs and values and is aware that some people in the church would find that difficult, 'But I'm firm in my faith, I know where I stand, and I think sharing that is how to get people to consider where they are.' If the 'fundamentals of Creation' and the 'love of God' are the same in the different traditions, 'Who am I to judge, to say, "Actually, believe in this way"? I can't do that. I think God is bigger than all of it.'

Annie reflects that her outgoing personality suits the context and the role. In contrast to her curate's role which she experiences as much more prescriptive, the chaplain's role is 'what I'm making it really.' The college has provided her with a room, used by the counsellors in her absence, but which is her space. She has been able to advertise the chaplaincy there and interested students know where to find her. However, the foundation of her work has been going out and about, being seen around the college, engaging with students and staff by 'tapping in to where they are', building a profile for chaplaincy and building relationships. Her approach is to set up activities that the youngsters want to do, 'that actually come from them'. A lot of time is spent networking and getting involved in the life and work of the community. For example, she has taken a lesson with the Buddhist A Level group and supported staff through a time of cuts and redundancies. Her priority is to 'engage' and 'to capture the imagination of youngsters to think.'

Annie sees the work as 'an embracing mission' in that:

'by my example and my care and my outreach, I hope to live my Christian faith and to stand firm in that Christian faith whilst not making judgement on other folk who come from a different direction ... So I don't feel compromised in the slightest because I feel that that

Christian outlook, sharing the love of God, is the whole purpose of chaplaincy.'

Associate Vicar and supervisor of FE College Chaplain

Mark is responsible for education and discipleship across the parish and supervises the FE chaplain with whom he has little day to day contact. Because the college chaplaincy is located within an institution, he describes it as being 'self-contained' and that 'it could go on almost entirely divorced from the life of the parish' unlike the chaplaincy to older people which is much more integrated. He perceives that the danger inherent in there being little interaction 'between the established churches based on a parochial model and the chaplaincy that they're supporting' is that the chaplaincy brings little to the Project apart from relieving people of some responsibilities and that it is hard to foster a sense of it being owned by the parish and the Methodist Church.

This sense of ownership and integration with the parish work is seen as vital if the churches are going to support the work financially. People will inevitably ask 'What do we get for our money?' but there are also the important questions, 'Why are we doing this?', 'What does this really mean?' and 'Can we relate to this in something more than theory?' For Mark, this ministry needs to be understood within the context of the whole Project which he thinks needs to have a much clearer common vision and sense of journey and objective. Only when this is articulated can they explain why they feel that chaplaincy is an important part of the whole mission and ministry of the church in the town. The challenge is to work out how to achieve this in practice.

Mark suggests that they will have to look at how the chaplains can be 'more present in more of the communities of the church' and how they represent their work and achievements to people. He sees this as a difficult symbiosis to achieve given that, 'I think the chaplains have a much clearer idea about what they think they're doing than the rest of the parish.' This is one of the challenges that the chaplaincies pose to the Project. They will also bring

challenges about 'how people see the world and also how we see particular groups of people.' However, 'My guess is that we're not in a particularly good position to even see the challenges.' The 'gap' between chaplaincy and parish ministry is seen by Mark as a function of everyone being over-busy so that there is no time to reflect together on the work, 'it is about an intentional process of integration and that means making that a priority and giving it time and space in a world where there isn't much time and space for time and space.' Ultimately, he locates this challenge within the wider ecclesial context:

'I think there's a long long way to go in integrating this model with day to day parish ministry and that's going to be compounded by the fact that the nature of parish ministry is changing and the nature of the institution of the church is changing and may not be able to survive very long anyway.'

Mark understands chaplains as being appointed to a role because of the particular gifts and skills that they bring to an area of ministry. They are then given the time and authorisation to focus on that area. The basic value to the whole church is that ministry is done that would otherwise not be done and that the church is present in places that otherwise it would not be: chaplaincy is 'really good PR.' Chaplains are 'certainly part of the mission of the church', particularly in secular institutions like the college:

'to have a chaplain there who can encourage young people to address what it means to be human and what it means to relate to others and what that means about the value of life and the value of other people is very important. And it is about mission in that it is about promoting the possibility of a Christian view of the world.'

The value of the contribution that chaplaincy can make to human flourishing and the common good is emphasised:

‘the value to *humanity* is more important than the value to the church ... I’m not sure that it matters whether it’s valuable to the Project or not, it’s actually whether it’s good for the institution concerned and good for the young people concerned ... and the fact that we’re able to facilitate that, *that’s* the important thing.’

The case study story

This case study shows how structural reorganisation and pressure on human resources in the church was grasped as an opportunity to rethink parochial structures and ways of working in order to enhance the effectiveness of the mission and ministry of the church in one area. Ecumenical working was established as central to the theological, missional and ecclesial thinking that was undertaken and a vision and strategy for the church’s work produced. Chaplaincy was seen as strategically important to the missional engagement with the community that the churches wanted to achieve. However, the practice of chaplaincy has brought to light tensions between ways of working and the difficult challenge of finding ways of integrating the vision for chaplaincy within the context of the church and parish focus.

Part Three summary

Part Three has presented the interpreted case study stories. These stories were written following the data analysis (Cf. Figure 3.2) and the consequent identification of three central themes across the whole data set. These themes are: the role of theologies of mission in the emergence of chaplaincy roles; the identity and integrity of chaplaincy; and the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry. These themes and their representation in the case study stories provide the basis for the interpretation and discussion in Part Four.

PART FOUR

NARRATING THE STORY OF CHAPLAINCY: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Part Four brings the main themes developed from the empirical data into dialogue with the wider horizon of the story of the growth in chaplaincy drawing on theoretical perspectives developed from the literature discussed in Chapter One. It is from this interpretive dialogic process, moving backwards and forwards between the whole and the parts, that understanding has emerged. This interpretive hermeneutic, discussed in Chapter Two, is central to this study. It is this process that has enabled the particular instances of the development of chaplaincy roles to be seen within a larger whole so that the fresh significance of the phenomenon for the mission and ministry of the church can be proposed and the research question addressed.

Chapter Seven

The role of theologies of mission in the emergence of chaplaincy roles

Introduction

One of the most significant findings revealed by the cross-case analysis described in Chapter Three is that all the participants identified chaplaincy work as central to the mission of the contemporary church. The studies revealed a pervasive awareness that the church needs to find ways of connecting with the majority of people who no longer relate to a faith community and that chaplaincy roles represent a significant way in which the cultural gap between churchgoers and non-churchgoers can be bridged. This chapter will begin by considering some of the challenges that the contemporary cultural context can be understood as posing to the mission of the church. It will then discuss the theologies of mission evidenced in the studies and the part they play in the emergence of chaplaincy roles in response to that context. In Chapter One I discussed the literature relating to the contextual background of the growth in chaplaincy. This included contemporary understandings of mission (Bosch, 1992; Spencer, 2007; Heywood, 2011) and of the prevailing cultural milieu with particular reference to the turn to spirituality and the subjectivisation of culture (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). The discussion will be located within the understandings of mission that have emerged over the last twenty years which have enabled chaplaincy in community contexts to be understood as being at the forefront of the church's missional responses to the world.

The contemporary cultural challenge to the mission of the church

'Well, I think it's [chaplaincy is] quite a big part of the mission of the church because if the folks won't come to the church building then the folks have got to go out to where the folks are' [Supermarket Chaplain: CS2].

The above observation is echoed by several research participants and points to the central challenge to the church of finding appropriate ways to

reconfigure itself in order to connect with the majority of the population who are 'closed to institutional belonging but open to "God" and the transcendent' (Slater 2011b, p.14). Since Davie (1994, p.107) asked the question, 'If churchgoing in its conventional sense is diminishing, through which institutional mechanisms can those concerned about the religious factor in contemporary society work outside of the church itself?', the search for an answer has been one of the central concerns of the churches as they seek to engage with the consumer-led, fluid and dispersed character of contemporary, post Christendom life in which belonging to an institutional church is a minority choice. This is the challenge to the church of a changing culture.

In 2004 the Church of England report *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* (The Archbishops' Council, 2004) recognised the challenge that contemporary culture had set the church. The development of 'Fresh Expressions', 'emerging church' and the training of 'Pioneer Ministers' were all responses to the need to find ways of connecting with people the church was finding it increasingly hard to reach. The report quotes a much older World Council of Churches report (WCC 1968, cited in The Archbishops' Council, 2004) in order to characterise the nature of the contemporary missionary task:

'The missionary task remains the same:

"A changing culture constitutes a call from God. Many people today live in a variety of worlds such as family, job, leisure, politics and education. These worlds represent different social structures."

The gospel must be proclaimed afresh within these different structures' (The Archbishops' Council 2004, p.13).

The report continues by suggesting that the perceived 'decline of the Church' may be ultimately caused:

‘neither by the irrelevance of Jesus, nor by the indifference of the community, but by the Church’s failure to respond fast enough to an evolving culture, to a changing spiritual climate, and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit’ (2004, p.14).

The Church is still faced with the challenge to respond to the three contextual strands identified in 1968: an evolving culture, a changing spiritual climate and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. With reference to the first strand, in Chapter One I discussed how Ballard addresses the issue of the Church’s need to respond to contemporary culture. He suggests that the current growth in chaplaincy roles represents one way in which the Church is responding to the evolving culture. As networks virtual and otherwise have become the characteristic locus of social interaction and people constantly move between social structures, geographical location has arguably declined in significance. In this cultural context, Ballard (2009) sees the chaplaincy model as an attempt to express the relevance of the gospel to every area of life, each area requiring a particular response.

The significance of chaplaincy as a response of faith communities to this evolving cultural milieu is reflected in the recent commissioning of the BBC 2 series *Chaplains: Angels of Mersey – Taking faith out onto the streets with Liverpool’s chaplains* (BBC, 2012). The series offered a collage of diverse models of the engagement of different faith community representatives in a variety of contexts under the umbrella term ‘chaplaincy’. In the context of this discussion, it is telling to note how chaplaincy was characterised in the commentary, ‘Chaplains are modern-day disciples ... they take the word of God out of the church and into the places we work and play’ (BBC, 2012). As I will demonstrate, the studies suggest that the development of chaplaincy roles is a direct response to this missional challenge faced by the church.

The second significant contextual strand identified by the *Mission Shaped Church* report (The Archbishops’ Council, 2004) as requiring an ecclesial response is the ‘changing spiritual climate’. The rise to prominence of ‘spirituality’ was identified in Chapter One as one of the significant cultural

currents relevant to the growth in chaplaincy. Davie (1994, p.198) observed that, 'Religious life...is not so much disappearing as mutating, for the sacred undoubtedly persists and will continue to do so, but in forms that may be very different from those which have gone before.' The more recent research of Heelas and Woodhead (2005) bears out this view concluding that traditional forms of religious association are giving way to and being influenced by new forms of spirituality for which engagement with personal experience is a key component. The authors suggest that underlying the contemporary turn from religion to spirituality is the 'subjectivisation' of culture within which sensitivity to inner life and well-being takes precedence over any demand to conform to external obligations (Slater 2011b, p.14).

Tacey (2004) links this cultural phenomenon to religious traditions suggesting that if they are to continue to thrive, they need to pay heed to personal experience and to recognise it as a potential locus of revelation. Just as Christ ministered in the community, revealing the sacred in the midst of everyday life, so the church needs to focus on revealing the presence of God in the everyday structures and experiences of people's lives. Davie (1994, p.200) suggests that parish churches find it hard to connect with this cultural milieu, 'for they continue to provide...a production rather than a consumption version of religion; providing, that is, a consistent pattern of worship and pastoral care, dictated by the obligations of their role.' In contrast, the studies suggest that chaplaincy, characteristically located within social rather than ecclesial structures, provides ways for the church to come alongside people in the midst of daily life, to engage with people who have little or no connection with the church and to address individual and social concerns by listening to individual and social experiences and responding accordingly.

As I will go on to discuss, it is this dialogic approach to missional engagement that is characteristic of chaplaincy as presented in these studies. This enables the discernment of and response to the third contextual strand referred to in the *Mission Shaped Church* report, namely the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Pickard (2009) echoes this recognition of the

need to attend to pneumatology in his exposition of an ecclesiology of ministry that could serve the mission of the church today. In setting out the theological and ecclesiological foundations necessary to a truly collaborative ministry that can focus its energies on mission, Pickard identifies the need to articulate afresh the relationship in Anglican ministry between a Christological and Pneumatological approach. He contends that an over-emphasis on Christological representation can lead to a static ontology of orders and the prioritisation of clerical over lay ministry and of ministry over the Church. Set alongside this is the development of an understanding of ministry as that of the whole church, the theological foundation of which can be 'located in a renewed emphasis on the work of Christ through the agency of the Spirit. This recovery of the dynamic relation between Christology and Pneumatology constitutes the theological promise at the heart of recent developments in the understanding and practice of ministry' (2009, p.17). This approach prioritises charisma over institution and characterises ministry as, 'an emergent *charism*-generated activity of the whole Church. The community of faith, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, receives and exercises the gifts of God for the common good, witness and service: the mission of the Church' (2009, p.36).

Building on Pickard (2009), chaplaincy may be seen not only as responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world but the growth in roles may also been seen as a response to the Spirit's promptings within the church. With the recent development of a mixed economy of ministry in response to the cultural challenges facing the church, the importance of an ecclesiology of ministry which can help to make sense of the relationships between ministries is clear. This will be the focus of the discussion about the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry in Chapter Nine.

I have described some of the contours of the cultural context with which the church is seeking to engage missionally. Awareness of this context and the challenges that it presents is key to the way in which participants have thought about mission and the role that thinking has had in the development

of chaplaincy roles. I will now discuss this dynamic in relation to the case study data and contemporary understandings of mission.

Theologies of mission in the case studies

An operant theology of mission⁵

In CS1, Chris speaks of herself as having ‘grown’ the chaplaincy role rather than having taken on a pre-existing role. Embedded within both the church and the farming communities, she was able to discern the opportunity to do this within her remit as a Diocesan Rural Officer. Most of the people she works with as a chaplain do not go to church but the strong relational base of trust that she has forged within the farming community provides the basis for her chaplaincy work. The chaplaincy role enables her to engage with farmers where they live and associate, to listen to their individual and social concerns, to respond flexibly to those concerns and to take their experience seriously as the starting point for that engagement. Although Chris is a distinctive Christian presence, she is aware that it is who she is in that role that really counts with the community, ‘It’s because they know me as a farmer that they will talk, they know that I would understand’. She recognises the reciprocity at the heart of her involvement with a community that she cares about deeply when she says, ‘now I don’t farm any more, it’s given me an excuse, if you like, to go into the farming community and still be part of it.’

The role has not been developed intentionally as part of a mission strategy for engaging with and serving this community because Chris was already engaged with the community as a farmer herself. However, she does see the work as missional in that the role, located in the structures of rural life, enables her to work across parish boundaries in order to engage with people who would otherwise have little or no contact with the church. Although chaplaincy is seen as missional, Chris is careful to describe what she means by ‘mission’, ‘it’s not necessarily getting bums on seats in the pew. That’s not what it’s all about. It’s bringing God into people’s lives at a time when

⁵ *The Four Voices of Theology* model describing operant, espoused, normative and formal theological voices is presented in Cameron, H. et al., 2010. *Talking about God in Practice*. London: SCM, p.54.

they are vulnerable without ramming it down their throats.’ What it is about, is being available as a representative Christian person to listen to what people need to say and to their lives and experience in order to be able to discern where God’s Spirit may be at work in the world and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in ways that contribute to human flourishing and thus to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Chris is aware that great sensitivity is needed in this task and that often what is needed is to work in the ‘foundational domain’ enabling people to engage with the intimations they may have of an enduring reality rather than in the ‘explicit domain’ of gathered church life and traditional Christian symbolism (Morisy, 2004). Whilst the explicit language of faith may often not be evident, nevertheless, Chris is very much aware that in what she does, what she offers in the service of the community and in who she is for the community, she is collaborating with God’s mission in the world:

‘I think most of the livestock farmers that I work with see me as more of a practical person which gives them the security to open up. But I’m doing all of this with God and when you’re working with Creation, as we all are, and when you see new life born every spring ... then you can’t help but be conscious of theology, of Creation. And most farmers would never in a million years articulate that but they’re doing it, you know (pause) it’s not something that you can put into words – but it happens.’

The theological dimension of the work here characteristically remains implicit in the practice and through the distinctive presence of the chaplain who has been formed in the faith tradition. The commitment is to the nurturing of people’s faith, the opening of spaces of grace and to the possibilities for transformation be it on a personal or systemic level. In this case, the operant theology of mission, incarnated in practice, understands service and pastoral care as being core dimensions of the church’s vocation to serve God’s mission in the world. This understanding accords with Hull’s (2006, p.2) assertion in his critique of *Mission Shaped Church* that ‘The church is

not the fulfilment or flowering of mission. The flowering of mission is the Kingdom.’ However, in CS1, this theology is not explicitly articulated and consciously espoused so that it can be represented to others as a rationale for the work.

The mission of the church and the missio Dei

The next two case studies evidence much more explicit thinking about the relationship between theologies of mission and the development of chaplaincy roles. This thinking has been undertaken in the context of developments in understandings of the church’s mission over the last twenty years in relation to the concept of the *missio Dei*. Heywood (2011, p.1) points out that over that period, ‘Mission has moved from the periphery of the church to its centre’ so that ‘Mission is no longer seen as an optional activity undertaken by a particular kind of church but rather the church’s core identity is now understood as being constituted as the bearer of God’s mission in the world’ (Slater, 2011b). The vocation of the church has come to be understood as being to serve the mission of God in the world for the flourishing of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, this missionary calling derives from an understanding of the very nature of God as missionary. The community that Jesus gathered around himself was to be a visible sign that the kingdom of God was arriving in him. In the Gospel of John, Jesus entrusts the mission of God to this community saying, ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you’ (John 20.21).⁶

From a similar perspective and as discussed in Chapter One, Bosch (1992, p.519) grounds his Protestant holistic theology of mission in the concept of the *missio Dei*. This theology of mission highlights the nature of the church as ‘sent’ into the world to establish the kingdom in the particular circumstances of everyday life. As Heywood remarks:

‘Rather than following a universally applicable blueprint, the community is called to discern the shape of God’s mission for each

⁶ The quotation is from the New Revised Standard Version of the bible.

place and time and to allow its own life constantly to be renewed by the Holy Spirit so as to fulfil that mission' (2011, p.113).

CS1 illustrates the deep missional instinct at the heart of the establishment of the chaplaincy role. Chris understands that if that discernment is to take place, the church needs to be alongside people, listening, paying attention to where the Holy Spirit may be at work in the world. The heart of this approach is relational because God is relational and mission flows from the relational heart of God. As Chris says of the essence of her work, 'it's the being alongside people and being with them so that you understand their problems ... it's building up trust and being alongside and being part of what they're doing'. It is the relational foundations of trust that enable people to talk about the reality of their experience and this is the starting point for discerning what God might be doing in that place and how the chaplain, as representative of the church, might best serve that mission. This understanding of mission can therefore be characterised as co-creative collaboration with God's work in the world; it is collaborative with God and with the communities and people it serves.

I suggest that Chris's emphasis on relationship as core to chaplaincy work relates directly to the above understanding of mission as a gracious overflowing of the relational life of God. This relates to the discussion of Spencer's work (Spencer, 2007) in Chapter One which presents mission as grounded in the participative relationship that is the Trinitarian life of God; mission is the outpouring of the Trinitarian dance-like life of mutual participation into the world. It invites others to share in this life-giving way that is marked by a mutuality recognised by Chris in what the work gives to her and which calls for certain qualities and ways of working in those who embrace this kind of theology of mission.

The development of chaplaincy roles within espoused theologies of mission

In contrast to CS1, Paul the Team Rector in CS2 articulates clearly the relationship that he sees between a theology of mission and the development of chaplaincy roles within the team. In the interview, he refers

to the *Mission Shaped Church* report (The Archbishops' Council, 2004) as providing 'a framework to work from' for thinking about mission. It is seen as important that the church should have 'a very clear presence beyond the church's walls'. Set in the midst of a retail centre with many parishioners involved in the retail business, 'it was very important that we found a way of engaging missionally with those folk and with the town around us. And I think the way in which we've developed various models of chaplaincy fits into that context.' Kate, the Town Centre Chaplain, points to the churches' deepening awareness of the gap between those who attend church and those who do not and the need to find ways through which the church can engage with the majority of people who do not:

'I think there's a very big gap now between people who are un-churched and de-churched and those who are worshipers and I think one of the ways to bridge that gap is through the chaplaincy, whatever chaplaincy you do' [Town Centre Chaplain: CS2].

The widening of this cultural gap may give pragmatic impetus to the missional imperative. However, if such initiatives are to be effective and sustainable I suggest that they need to be underpinned by a theology of mission that can locate them within the wider strategic narratives of mission within the church. This could enable those within church structures to understand the rationale for chaplaincy posts and in understanding, perhaps be more prepared to support and resource them.

Paul talks about the development of the team's underlying theology of mission in terms of 'sentness', a missional sense which he felt needed enhancing in the town centre church when he took the post.

This awareness of the need for the church to be where people are in order to engage with their lived experience is conceptualised by Paul in terms of the need to move from a fairly passive role for the church in its social context to a more active one. He describes this as the need to move from a dominant Benedictine mode of engagement to develop a more Franciscan mode

alongside. He suggests that Anglicans have always been good at the Benedictine mode, offering hospitality and welcoming people to come and share what they have but that they are less comfortable with a 'peripatetic' Franciscan approach. He perceives that, 'we are more Franciscan now so the two traditions work together.' He reflects that this shift in emphasis has impacted on the town centre and other congregations in the way that they now see their ministry and the involvement that they have with the local community through the various chaplaincy and community initiatives that have been developed.

Again, this points to the reciprocity at the heart of chaplaincy and missional engagement. The process of the development of chaplaincy roles and the enhanced opportunities for church members to offer themselves in service to the local community has enriched the life of the church and vice versa. The potential that chaplaincy roles contain for participation in the local community within the contemporary context resonates with Spencer's (2007, p.175) paradigm of mission, discussed in Chapter One, which is characterised as 'finding hope in local communities'. This approach to mission requires the church to lay aside its power and wealth, 'becoming vulnerable to the local community, listening before witnessing, changing and being changed by the encounter.' In this paradigm, the pre-requisite for mission is a commitment to authentic engagement and dialogue with the grounded reality of life. This must be approached with humility and a recognition that both parties in the dialogue may be changed by the encounter. This suggests that listening to individuals and their context and genuine dialogue are essential modes of chaplaincy's engagement with today's cultural context.

Percy (2006, p.105) points out that most ecclesial communities are having to react and evolve with the environments in which they are set rather than 'shaping them from some position of inherited privilege.' He points out that in this milieu, the value of theology and ministry as public discourse rests on the quality of their social, intellectual and cultural engagement. There needs to be a deep commitment, 'to dialogue, overhearing that is patient and attentive, listening to the conversations of the world in which the churches

and theology are habitually not included, and to an encounter and event based mode of praxis' (Percy 2005, p.81). This mode of engagement, within Spencer's paradigm of mission, is characteristic of effective chaplaincy. Within this plural, multi-faith context, 'dialogue and witness need to enter into dialectic: it is often in genuine encounter and dialogue that the opportunity occurs for authentic witness' (Slater 2011a, p.14). This witness is expressed through Christians offering themselves in service to local communities, 'so that they may give and receive hospitality and care and so that genuine dialogue and witness may take place' (Spencer 2007, p.180).

Morisy (2009, p.110) echoes Bosch's suggestion (1992, p.375) that we need to speak of the church 'with' rather than 'for' others in her contention that the church and its representatives need to understand themselves not as achieving some kind of 'success' in relation to community involvement but as *being* a contribution to the flourishing of the whole. This brings an emphasis on relationship with others and rather than the rewards of status and power that come with 'success', 'the rewards that come from being a contributor are deep, enduring, and hopeful'. When this is the case, Heywood (2011, p.14) suggests that the chaplain is not there 'to uphold the church's institutional presence' but 'as a sign of the social, moral and even spiritual significance' of the life of a particular community. What is chiefly valued about that person's presence is not what sets them apart but what brings them alongside, 'A shared humanity, vulnerability, a willingness to share the struggle, to explore the meaning of the mundane activities through which social life is maintained, perhaps to offer the hope of a better world.'

In CS2, Jenny, the Community Missioner and Police Chaplain, describes the intention behind the creation of her role in a way that accords with the missional paradigm explicated above. The aim was to establish a distinctive Christian ministry in the town centre, being available to listen and to engage in genuine dialogue with people on a social network basis beyond the traditional boundaries of the church. She begins from the premise that God is already present and active in the world and so the church needs to be 'getting out there'. Kate, Jenny and Peter who works with the homeless

charity, all cite Jesus' ministry, going out to encounter people in the midst of their everyday lives, as the model for chaplaincy and Jenny suggests that the church needs to learn this afresh. Rather than staying in church buildings and talking about 'sustaining this sacred centre', the church needs to recognise that 'the sacred centre is wherever God is...and we have to be prayerfully asking Him "Where do you want us to be?" and following Him out there.' What is required is a willingness to be 'up close and personal with people', to be available to listen and to respond rather than being caught up in what may be seen as the inward-looking bureaucratic demands of ministry within church structures. Chaplains, she suggests, 'can show the church how it's done quite frankly' because they meet people where they are and are prepared to live the 'grey areas of life':

'And it's the grey areas of life where life actually happens, where exchanges take place, where time is, you know where you're able to have a conversation waiting at a bus stop for example, walking from A to B' [Community Missioner and Police Chaplain: CS2].

What bears witness to those outside church structures is the quality of authentic discipleship, 'To live that beautiful life ... which just inevitably makes people want to ask questions' as Jenny terms it, and which is 'about setting up mission as life, not just something we do on occasion ... when are we going to learn that every little thing we say speaks for God?'

This exemplifies in practice Volf's characterisation of the relation between Church and Culture based on the New Testament first letter of Peter as 'soft difference' (1994, p.7). Addressing the question of how the Christian community lives out its identity in a particular cultural context, he suggests that soft difference, as opposed to a harsh approach, is 'the missionary side of following in the footsteps of the crucified Messiah' and that it is part of Christian identity itself. 'To be a Christian means to live one's own identity in the face of others in such a way that one joins inseparably the belief in the truth of one's own convictions with a respect for the convictions of others' (1994, p.7).

Jenny's challenge to the church begins to focus the different perspectives of those who work partially or wholly outside church structures and those who work wholly within them which will be discussed in the next chapter.

There are different perspectives on chaplaincy and its relationship to a theology of mission within the practice of the team in CS2. This is evident, for example, in the involvement with the YMCA and the supermarket where the work is seen as an extension of parish ministry rather than having a ministerial identity in its own right. However, the theology of mission articulated by Paul has been instrumental in this case in the strategic development of chaplaincy initiatives as a way for the church to fulfil its calling to serve the mission of God in the world for the flourishing of the kingdom and as part of the sending of God. In the literature, this is what Steddon terms 'guest' in contrast to 'host' theology, what Todd (2007) characterises in relation to chaplaincy as 'living faith in other people's houses' and what Paul describes as a more Franciscan than Benedictine paradigm of engagement.

This theological approach has been reinforced by the pragmatic need for the church to find appropriate forms of mission and ministry to enable it to engage with the people it may be finding it increasingly hard to reach in the present cultural context. This is certainly one factor behind the strategic missional thinking underpinning the establishment of the ecumenical project in CS3. As in all the case studies, the challenge to the churches in this market town was how to offer Christian witness and service to the majority of the population who do not engage with a faith community.

Chapter Six describes how added impetus was given to the imperative to find new ways for the church to engage with the local community by a diocesan reorganisation that meant a reduction in the number of full-time stipendiary clergy. The response to this changing social and ecclesial context was to collaborate with the Methodist Church in a process of theological and strategic thinking in order to establish structures and models of working

which would enable the churches to be as effective as possible in serving the community of which they are a part. This means that the development of chaplaincy roles in CS3 has occurred within an explicitly articulated espoused theology of mission and an ecclesiological model of working set out in the initial consultation document (Churches Working Group, 2008). This provides a theological and strategic framework for thinking about mission and service beyond the gathered congregations but it also sets out the structural and governance framework that the implementation of such a vision would require. This level of collaborative strategic thinking about mission and ministry only occurs in CS3.

Although tensions between chaplaincy roles and church based ministry are evident in each case study and will be discussed in Chapter Nine, it is in CS3 that the importance of the relationship between missiology and ecclesiology comes to the fore and is addressed explicitly. The consultation document recognises that if the church is going 'to be involved in the midst of this needy world, working alongside and with all people' (Churches Working Group 2008, p.6) and is to utilise scarce resources effectively in order to serve the mission of God, then the ecclesial structures need to be put in place that will enable that to happen; new models of working need to develop if new initiatives are to grow. The theological and ecclesial logic of this development was underpinned by enculturation in the context of a market town where ministers and people from different church and social communities know each other, a context which lends itself to ecumenical and shared witness. The new working models described in Chapter Six released human and other resources that enabled the development of shared mission initiatives including chaplaincy roles. As the next chapter will discuss, this presents significant challenges to the church.

In the light of this context, it was recognised that the skills of staff members would be utilised most effectively if they could focus the development of their skills and knowledge in particular areas rather than work being duplicated by the different churches and everyone trying to do everything. This led the Project to adopt a strategic model of functional specialisation. Within this

approach, certain areas of involvement such as the FE College required specific time and expertise leading to the development of a specialist chaplaincy role.

Chaplaincy is seen as an important strategic means of missional engagement with the local community given the fact that ministers' time is so limited and congregations may be reluctant to engage missionally:

'the other way of doing it [mission] is saying well, OK, I haven't got much time to do it myself but suppose there was somebody within our structure who could have more time to do it, who perhaps could work with groups in the congregation and also groups outside the congregation. So, I think this again is a driver for looking at chaplaincy initiatives' [Vicar CS3].

John, the Vicar, suggests that what is needed in terms of the church's mission is 'a serious engagement with individual communities':

'I'm not saying that chaplaincy is the only answer and I'm not saying it will always be the answer, but at a particular point in time, it seemed to fit with what we wanted to do which was to reach out into the areas we'd identified as key ones when we looked at all this ... it enables us to step into key areas in the life of the town where we felt that the church needed to make more of an input' [Vicar: CS3].

All the case studies emphasise the participatory and relational foundation to chaplaincy in the community echoing Spencer's grounding of mission in his understanding of the participative relationship that is the Trinitarian life of God. Grounded in this life that constantly flows into the world, chaplains seek to collaborate with the creative life of the Holy Spirit at work in the world. This collaborative, relational understanding of mission refers back to Taylor's (1984, p.147) call to the churches to pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, in the minute particularities of everyday life, reminding them that, 'the church is essentially scattered, like seed in the

earth, salt in the stew, yeast in the dough. The Christian's milieu is the world because that is the milieu of the Holy Spirit'. There may have been theological, strategic and pragmatic motivations for the development of chaplaincy roles but Tom, the Methodist Minister, points out that in the coming together of so many dynamics in a particular time and place, people felt that the Holy Spirit was at work and that their human efforts to understand how to participate in the mission of God were part of a larger picture; that this was God's time too:

'certainly we felt that ... God's Spirit was involved very much in what was happening ... and that we were involved in something which was bigger than us as individuals, bigger than us as individual churches and it was about how could we best minister, mission and serve the community so it wasn't just church based, it went beyond that' [Methodist Minister: CS3].

Here, the development of new structures and roles is understood as the church responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, part of the three-fold responsiveness to the contemporary context identified as necessary to the church by the *Mission Shaped Church* report (The Archbishops' Council, 2004) quoted above.

In CS3, the fact that chaplains work on different models to parish ministers and that they are located significantly within non-church structures raises challenges for the churches and raises questions about the different genres of ministry that were also coming to the fore in CS2. As John stated: 'I think the challenge it presents to the church is: first of all, it challenges them to take mission seriously ... and it challenges them to fund something that they may not get any direct returns from' [Vicar: CS3].

Just as missional initiatives in CS2 challenged the town centre congregation to develop its own missional identity so here, the missional dynamic of chaplaincy flows towards the church as well as the community. John reflects that at times of financial pressure, if congregations are asked what they

want, 'they always say clergy'; they want someone to look after them 'which means that mission ... takes second place.' Chaplaincy challenges the church to keep looking outward and if congregations are to rise to that challenge they need to be helped to understand chaplaincy as an integral part of the mission of the church, 'or else they won't fund people who on the face of it aren't doing anything directly for them.' This implies that even those who uphold the parish system can be captured by a consumption model of religion within which they are reluctant to resource anything that does not give them a direct return on their investment. This is the difficult challenge posed by the development of chaplaincy roles in ministerial contexts: 'chaplaincy is part of mission but it's a dangerous part of mission unless you are in a position to really manage it and integrate it with what you're actually doing and that is difficult' [Vicar: CS3].

Chapter summary

This chapter has brought the empirical data into dialogue with theoretical perspectives developed from the literature. It has presented the development of chaplaincy roles in the community as a Spirit-led ecclesial response to a changing cultural milieu. Chaplaincy is characterised as a response to the perennial missionary task, set out in the *Mission-Shaped Church* report (The Archbishops' Council, 2004), to proclaim the gospel afresh in the contemporary context. In this plural, fragmented and largely de-churched society, it means that chaplains are called to minister within the different social structures that people inhabit.

If a changing culture does indeed constitute a call from God as the report affirms, then rather than the development of chaplaincy roles being viewed as random and marginal to the central missional concerns of the church, this development can be seen as an ecclesial phenomenon that is central to those concerns. In CS2 and CS3, the development of chaplaincy roles is seen as a central component of the church's strategy for mission: in the words of the Preface to the Declaration of Assent made by all authorised ministers in the Church of England, it is part of the church's historic commitment to bring 'the grace and truth of Christ to this generation' (The

Archbishops' Council 2000, p.xi). By locating chaplaincy as a genre of ministry within contemporary understandings of the church's mission as the call to serve the *missio Dei* in the world, the growth in chaplaincy is revealed as both central to the mission of the church and as a distinct phenomenon requiring serious theological reflection and the allocation of appropriate resources.

The research evidence shows that theologies of mission play a key role in the development of chaplaincy roles but also that once roles are established tensions between chaplaincy and church structures of ministry often come into play. Are chaplains just re-located parish ministers or do they have a particular vocation and identity? If they do, what characterises that identity and how does this relate to the institutional church? These are questions that the parallel phenomena of Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry wrestle with and which have led Goodhew, Roberts and Volland (2012, p.19) to locate them within the apostolic tradition of the Church. However, a considerable amount of theological reflection has been resourced by the church in relation to Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry whilst Chaplaincy has been left on its own to develop. It is therefore to the above two questions that I turn in the next two chapters.

Chapter Eight

The identity and integrity of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry

Introduction

Having discussed the role of theologies of mission in the development of chaplaincy roles, this chapter will explore the nature of chaplaincy itself. The description of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry is apt to this discussion. The Cambridge online English dictionary defines 'genre' as 'a style, especially in the arts, that involves a particular set of characteristics' (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013). I use it here to suggest the contextual responsiveness of chaplaincy which does involve a 'particular set of characteristics' but one which may be expressed differently in different contexts. I will begin by problematising the use of the term 'chaplaincy' and will then draw the empirical data into critical dialogue with relevant theoretical perspectives and my own phronesis in order to articulate core dimensions that can be seen as characteristic of chaplaincy. I will thereby describe the identity and integrity of chaplaincy within the church's ecology of mission. This description will provide the basis for the discussion of the relationship between chaplaincy and parish-based ministry in Chapter Nine.

The problem of 'chaplaincy'

Chaplaincy has a long history within Christian churches in the West (Slater, 2011a) with some tracing its antecedents back to St Martin of Tours in the fourth century (Jones, 2010). However, traditional understandings of chaplaincy as referring to Christian clergy 'commissioned by a faith group or an organisation to provide pastoral service in an institution, organisation, or governmental entity' (Swinton, 2002, p.1) have changed in response to the challenges of the contemporary plural context discussed in the previous chapter. There are now lay chaplains, chaplains of different faiths, Humanist chaplains and inter-faith chaplains and Christian chaplains will often find themselves working as part of a multi-faith and/or ecumenical team. It should also be noted that some practitioners would not want to use the word 'chaplain'. This may be because of its Christian origins or because of its perceived religious connotations in cultures such as healthcare where the

chaplain's remit has broadened from a primary focus on religious care to a focus on more generic spiritual care. Todd also notes that in multi-faith contexts, using words such as 'ministry' to define chaplaincy can be problematic because the term emerges from a particular faith tradition. Todd (2007, p.6) chooses to use the more neutral term 'practice' and defines chaplaincy as, 'A practice exercised by faith practitioners, on behalf of faith communities, but dispersed within other communities, institutions and organisations.' This definition would currently locate most, though not all, chaplains but it does not address the issue of understanding what it means to be called a chaplain and what the parameters might be for a practice to be chaplaincy.

This is particularly the case in community contexts. In institutional contexts such as hospitals and prisons, whatever the role ambiguities, most chaplains do at least have a job description and contract with the organisation in which they work. However, in many community contexts this may not be the case as seen for example in CS1 and the Supermarket Chaplain in CS2. It can be argued that in relation to emerging roles in community contexts, 'chaplain' has become 'an umbrella term used to denote anyone from a church with involvement in a community setting. It is used to refer to anything from part - time pastoral visiting to the provision of a formalised "professional" and accountable service to organisations such as colleges and nursing homes' (Slater, 2011a, p.4).

With so many people undertaking chaplaincy-type roles, chaplaincy is currently a focus of scrutiny for both the churches and the academy. There is a renewed impetus to look at what chaplains do in every context as evinced by York St. John University's 'Charting Chaplaincy in Action' conference (York St John University, 2012) in September 2012. The aim of the conference was to establish a forum for chaplaincy research and reflection on practice. It is telling that the first example given of an issue that the conference was intended to provide a forum to discuss was, 'What makes chaplaincy "chaplaincy"?' In other words, what is the identity and

integrity of chaplaincy? It is *the* question that for different reasons, chaplains, the academy and the churches are all having to ask.

This brief allusion to some of the wider complexities of the use of the term 'chaplain' indicates just how problematic its use has become. The focus of this project is on Christian chaplains but even in this context, the studies suggest that there is no common understanding of what it means to be a chaplain. Cobb (2004, p.10) puts the issue succinctly in relation to Healthcare Chaplains when he asks:

'What is it about being a chaplain that causes them to define themselves as similar to one another; and what is it that causes others to recognise or attribute common characteristics in them by which they can be categorised as chaplains?'

I suggest that this highlights a serious dilemma because until a convincing response can be given to this question the use of the term will lack clarity and integrity. Furthermore, until the identity of chaplaincy and the particular set of characteristics that being a chaplain involves can be described, it is hard to see how issues of selection, training, resourcing and the development of faithful practice can be addressed or on what basis conversations with parish ministers located within church structures and conversations with the institutional church can take place.

With this question in mind, I will now draw on the data that have emerged from the studies in order to suggest three dimensions of chaplaincy in community contexts that need to be reflected on in relation to practice if effective chaplaincy roles are to be established and sustained. Although not all chaplaincy roles will exhibit all the characteristics described within these dimensions, they are intended to provide some basic parameters within which chaplaincy can be thought about and recognised as chaplaincy and thus represented coherently to others. Rather than construct a model of chaplaincy which might tend to solidify findings into an ideal representation, this more descriptive approach is able to be congruent with the data whilst

remaining open and able to function as a catalyst for further thought and development.

Interpretations of chaplaincy in the case studies: what is chaplaincy?

The different perceptions of chaplaincy found in the studies focus the problem of talking about it as a genre of ministry: there is little or no conceptual clarity. It is clear from the studies that chaplaincy not only looks different in different contexts but that it is understood and perceived in different ways depending on the theological, ecclesial and vocational standpoint from which a person views this ministry. I use 'ministry' to describe chaplaincy in the studies because all the participants were authorised Christian ministers and all the roles had emerged from ministerial contexts. At one end of the spectrum, chaplaincy can be used as a 'flag of convenience' under which ministry can be undertaken in a community context. Kim remarks:

'I just see it as me going in there, representative of the Anglican Church, to be there for people to talk to me or not and if I can help them or if I listen to them, that's what I see my role is. It's just a name that's been attached to the job (laughs) basically, as I see it'
[Supermarket Chaplain CS2].

In a similar way, Peter sees 'chaplaincy' as an extension of parish ministry: 'We don't refer to it as chaplaincy within our church. We refer to it as chaplaincy within the YMCA because I think that's how they see things ... in church it's just seen as part of the work' [YMCA CS2].

It is clear from this that being an authorised church minister does not offer any conceptual clarity about what it means to be a chaplain. Neither Kim nor Peter had a role description or contract with the respective organisations and both are volunteers. The organisations involved have not specified what they expect a chaplain to do. Kim and Peter perceive chaplaincy to be part of their church-based work and the designation 'chaplain' as enabling them to be present as church representatives in a secular context. This implies that

their ministerial identity remains entirely rooted in their ecclesial context rather than being in dialogue with the social context of their chaplaincy.

At the other end of the spectrum to this pragmatic use of the term, some participants perceived chaplaincy to be a definite vocation in its own right. Kate explained that, 'I began by being a school chaplain ... When I went through my selectors conference I knew that I didn't want at that time to be a parish priest, I wanted to be a chaplain' [Town Centre Chaplain CS2].

People like Kate and Clare in CS3 express a deep vocational commitment to working outside church structures and alongside people in the midst of their daily lives. Although Kate is also a parish priest, her ministerial identity is fundamentally shaped by her chaplaincy experience. She is convinced of the value and integrity of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry in its own right and has thought about the characteristics that constitute its identity.

The dimensions of chaplaincy

Such divergent perceptions of what it means to be a chaplain simultaneously epitomise the difficulty of saying anything at all about it and the necessity to do so. Brown (2011, p.4) remarks that 'chaplains are among the most prominent "shop windows" for the Christian faith'. This implies that given that their work takes place in the public square (Todd, 2011), it is important that they are able to give an account of their practice; what they think they are doing, what they do, and the skills and gifts required to do it. This is necessary not only for the development of faithful and effective chaplaincy practice but also to enable a mature and creative dialogue to take place between those working within church structures and those working as chaplains within social structures for the sake of those they seek to serve. Furthermore, if a narrative of chaplaincy that can be interpreted to both secular organisations and to the church can be articulated, then it is more likely that chaplaincy will be able to elicit the resources it needs: organisations, including the church, will only resource and support work that they understand and value as contributing to the life and purpose of their organisation. The importance of this is suggested, for example, in the FE

chaplaincy in CS2 where its contribution to human flourishing and the common good are understood by the organisation as contributing to its Equality and Diversity agenda. I suggest the following three dimensions could form a framework for such a narrative.

1. Theological integrity: chaplains are called and sent

Ballard (2009, p.18) suggests that if chaplaincy is of growing importance in the churches then it needs to be more firmly grounded theologically. The previous chapter discussed the ways in which particular theologies of mission formed the basis of strategic thinking about chaplaincy in the studies. This missional theology is echoed by the majority of the chaplains that I interviewed. For example, Kate reflects that:

‘for me, chaplaincy is being out there with people, wherever they are, and I think that’s the difference to being in a church...you’re sent out ... but I think it’s more than that, I think it’s actually showing the compassion of Christ ... in a way that is not always seen in a church setting’ [Town Centre Chaplain CS2].

The first characteristic therefore is that chaplaincy is missional in its commitment to serving the mission of God in the world. In order to be able to do this, to listen and discern how and where God may be at work in the world and therefore to discern how to respond, this ministry needs to be substantially located in the structures of society. John describes this dynamic in relation to the creation of the FE college chaplaincy post:

‘we realised that really it would only be successful if the person from the church working in the college was sufficiently part of the structure for everybody to know them and for them to know what was going on’ [Vicar CS3].

This is a theological and an ecclesiological imperative which understands the vocation of the church as being sent into the world, walking alongside people in their need and in their daily living, contributing to the flourishing of the

Kingdom of God as part of God's sending (Bosch, 1992). Chris speaks of this as 'being alongside', 'it's being alongside people so that you build up a trust, so that the trust is there when you need it.' [CS1] and Clare reflects:

'the beauty is that I can come and meet people exactly where they are and I seek to be completely non-judgemental. And if a conversation never mentions God that's fine. It's about ministering to the total person wherever they may be on their spiritual journey ... And then I personally am going feeling that I'm being sent by the congregation but that Christ goes before me and that I'm there to embody that sense of love and trust and easy communication with somebody' [Older People's Chaplain CS3].

From this I conclude that the primary ministry of the chaplain is not to build up the existing church or to establish fresh expressions of church but to embody and express God's love and grace with and for those who gather in a particular institution, place or network, to express the values of the kingdom of God and to witness as appropriate to the Christian gospel.

In offering this ministry, chaplains fulfil in an intentional and representative way the discipleship to which all Christians are called in order to contribute to human and social flourishing. Ecclesialogically, chaplains can therefore be understood as the dispersed church, intentionally fulfilling its vocation as the community of people called and sent to serve and witness in the world. As Goodhew, Roberts and Volland (2012, p.104) assert in relation to Fresh Expressions, 'Church is church whenever and wherever people gather around the risen Jesus – it is also Church when scattered as salt and light in the everyday contexts of work, leisure and personal relationships.' However, as I will discuss in Chapter Nine and as Brown (2011, p.4) notes, what may be the distinctive vocation of chaplaincy may also locate the gap in understanding between chaplaincy and church structures as being not about differing interpretations of the gospel but about 'the priority which should be given to maintaining and building up the empirical church of the here and now.'

Chaplains go to where people are, working collaboratively within other people's structures and in critical solidarity with those who gather in a particular context, whether or not they profess a particular faith. This 'guest' theology, discussed in the previous chapter, is articulated by Kate: 'in the retail park ... it is not a place as the role of the chaplain to evangelise because ... we are a guest on their ground. We have been invited in by the management team' [Town Centre Chaplain CS2].

At the heart of any chaplaincy role is the nuanced relationship with the particular context. There is often a strong empathy with the context in which a chaplain works with the sense of calling stemming from the chaplain's own experience. For example, Clare's experience of her own elderly parents needing spiritual support led to her involvement in older people's chaplaincy; Chris, a farmer, developed agricultural chaplaincy. Perceiving a need and the opportunity for involvement, the impetus is to serve the community with which they have empathy and understanding in order to contribute to its flourishing and in so doing to bear witness to God's involvement with every dimension of human life just as the sending of Christ bore witness. As Goodhew, Roberts and Volland (2012, p.37) state, 'God in Christ reaches out to human beings wherever they are. He comes to us. He does not wait for us to come to him.'

There is a strong perception within the data that the fundamental model for chaplaincy is Jesus' ministry, that chaplains are a continuing part of that sending. Paul reflects:

'Our folks go out to all sorts of places every morning but it's a visible sense of that presence ... we're an incarnate church so God just didn't give us the idea of incarnation he actually sent His Son to demonstrate it and in a sense, that's what chaplaincy is living out' [Team Rector CS2].

Peter makes the same explicit connection:

‘The model that Jesus gives I think is the model of a chaplain...do you remember he took the scroll of Isaiah, he gave what’s sometimes called his political outline of how he saw himself, working in the world, “He sent me to bring good news to the poor...” It seems to me that the next three years were spent outside of the synagogue – although he was in there sometimes – but outside meeting people ... where they were and when the opportunity arose to talk to them about spiritual things’ [Homeless Charity CS2].

The data suggest that the theological integrity of chaplaincy can be found in its missional, incarnational and dominical character which focuses on the service of the *missio Dei*, the building up of the Kingdom of God and contributing to human and social flourishing. Chaplains go to where people are, rather than waiting for people to come to the church, providing ‘a very clear presence beyond the church’s walls’ [Team Rector CS2], a ministry in the public square. This means that chaplains are in a position to be practical theologians in public life, working out theology amidst the daily particularities of life.

This missional focus of ministry beyond church walls is underpinned by an ecclesiology that is dispersed, collaborative, ecumenical and actively engaged with the whole of life. The chaplaincy practice in all the studies revealed a strong underlying theology of mission in which the chaplains’ self-understanding and their understanding of the church they represented had at its heart a clear sense of being called and sent to be in the world in order to collaborate with God’s mission. This theological, ecclesial and social location of chaplaincy has particular implications for the ministerial identity of chaplains.

2. Ministerial Identity: A distinctive, representative and recognised presence

The website for the Methodist Church Chaplaincy Development Project makes the important point that:

‘although every Christian is called to be a witness wherever they happen to find themselves, chaplaincy is a calling ... The difference between being a Christian witness and being a chaplain is that a chaplain is essentially recognised by the host organisation’ (Methodist Church, 2012).

Whilst this may be part of what characterises chaplaincy, I propose that it is not constitutive of the ministerial identity of a chaplain. Before discussing what is constitutive it is necessary to clarify what is meant in this context by the term ‘ministry’ itself given that it is used to denote both the service that is common to all Christians and particular differentiated forms of service within the Christian community. I take ministry in this context to refer to a form of Christian witness and service that is representative of the Christian community in a way that is publicly acknowledged and accountable.

This parameter for chaplaincy has fundamental implications for the ways in which roles are negotiated, set up, resourced and sustained and for how chaplains understand their own identity. For example, the FE Chaplain role in CS3 was negotiated between the church and the college and is jointly funded. The role is recognised by both the faith community and the organisation so that Annie is line managed within the college as well as being supervised in a church context. She has a contract, job description and office space. To her surprise, she finds that she wears a clerical collar as well as an orange hoodie with ‘Chaplain’ written on it as her way of signalling her distinctive role as a faith representative. She is clear about her own faith commitment but also clear that her role is a ‘multi-faith’ role. This is in the sense that she sees herself as being available to everyone, to people of all faiths and to those who profess no particular faith commitment, in order to ensure that as far as possible people receive the pastoral and spiritual care that they need across the organisation. Participation in and understanding of the context enables Annie to engage in a particular structure of relationships as a chaplain that had been unavailable to the parish priest who had previously only had the capacity to visit occasionally and was not part of the organisational structures.

This relational dynamic is also recognised by Paul in CS2 as he reflects on his own past experience as a part-time hospital chaplain:

‘although the parish priest does those things, a chaplain within an institution sees the context of that institution in a particular way and people who work there relate to that individual in a particular way. So that, for example, when I go into visit somebody in a hospital as a parish priest, people may well recognise that I am such a thing and may well have some respect and acknowledgement of that but the chaplain is seen in a very different context by the staff there and most would acknowledge that they have a very real right to be working alongside them as a colleague and I think that’s an important part of the work’ [Team Rector CS2].

This intentional participation in and critical solidarity with a context establishes ministerial focus and relationships beyond the gathered faith community and thereby builds a particular ministerial identity. Chaplains, to a greater or lesser extent, are embedded in a particular social context, seeking to understand that context from within whilst still maintaining their identity as representatives of a faith community and their capacity for prophetic witness alongside pastoral care and service. This is a complex place and identity to inhabit; not everyone is called to exercise this genre of public ministry, not everyone has the skills or capacity to do so.

Building on Cobb’s suggestion that ‘What it means to be a chaplain is realised in relationship to others and therefore the identity of chaplains is intrinsically social’, the data reveal the multivalent identity of chaplains and the negotiated nature of that identity. As Cobb (2004, p.11) states, ‘Chaplains cannot simply go around claiming a particular identity; the communities they relate to and deal with must validate it.’ In contrast to parish ministry in which one could argue that an explicit faith identity is primary, in chaplaincy where relationships are often primarily with people with no explicit connection with a faith community, chaplaincy requires a

nuanced and sophisticated capacity to negotiate one's identity in response to particular circumstances. Chaplains participate in different cultures and communities which may include, for example, the chaplaincy context, society, their faith community and often chaplaincy itself. This means that they need to understand the discourse and culture of each and therefore to be at least 'tri-lingual' (Todd, 2007) and skilled at cultural interpretation. I would argue that this requires a mature faith identity and a high degree of cultural and self-awareness.

For example, in CS1 Chris is constantly aware of when it is and is not appropriate to use explicit faith language. She is aware that witness is often made as much by who she is, the nature of her relationships and what she offers the community, as by any specific religious discourse that she may use. Although she is an authorised minister, her identity and authority to minister within the farming community are validated by the community itself, 'It's because they know me as a farmer that they will talk, they know that I would understand'. Formed and rooted in her faith tradition, she is able to meet people where they are without imposing an agenda upon them. This capacity is referred to explicitly by Annie in CS3 when she describes her motivation for ministry as the gospel imperative to care for people unconditionally as Christ did. This is seen as the foundation for her inclusive ministry in the college. She perceives that she can be there for people of different faiths because she can appreciate that they are in a certain place, not make a judgement on that, and encourage them to explore where they are. She goes on to say, 'But I'm firm in my faith, I know where I stand, and I think that is how to get people to consider where they are.'

The data suggest that where people have been able to establish their identity as a chaplain, validated and accounted by the community within which they serve, then chaplaincy is able to make an effective and valued contribution to the common good based on relational trust and mutual respect and understanding. This in turn enables them to challenge practices as well as to offer support. As Jenny says, 'it's about being a critical friend; being in the midst of a place where you are welcome, but you also have an opportunity to

challenge expressed views and practices' [Police Chaplain CS2]. Swinton (2003, p.7) makes this point in relation to healthcare chaplaincy when he suggests that chaplains can only transform healthcare practices if they are 'certain of who they are and are confident enough to act accordingly.' The data also suggest that where the role is not understood or validated by the organisation, as in the instance of Kim the supermarket chaplain in CS2, then it is much more difficult to establish an identity as a chaplain and therefore to develop an effective and sustainable chaplaincy.

The data also suggest that where people feel confident and validated in their identity as a chaplain, they are able to be themselves in their role. They are able to come alongside people in order to listen to their experience and to share, when appropriate, the recognition of a common humanity and vulnerability. Chris in CS1 sees 'being alongside' people as central to the identity of chaplaincy work and that depends on being approachable for everyone. Both the Town Centre Chaplain and the Chaplain to the homeless charity in CS2 refer to the fact that in chaplaincy, who one is in the role is key. Comparing chaplaincy with her church-based ministry, Kate reflects that, as a chaplain, 'it's very much your personality that's out there. They have their expectations but expectations of you perhaps as a person and not as a priest or a chaplain' [Town Centre Chaplain CS2]. Tom in CS2 put this starkly: 'Chaplains need to be normal, somebody who's not hiding behind a dog collar'. He was clear that at times, chaplains need to be willing to share themselves in genuine dialogue and conversation:

'So I think ... you've got to be the kind of person who's not hiding behind ... the formal title or the dog collar or the role or the liturgy or the paraphernalia that ministry often brings ... it's about being where people are, it's not about being in the church' [Methodist Minister CS2].

What makes a chaplain a chaplain? What characterises their ministerial identity in community contexts? The above discussion suggests three primary marks of chaplaincy: chaplains fulfil a representative role that

focuses the vocation of the church to serve the mission of God in the world; the chaplain's role is publicly recognised and validated; chaplains are appropriately accountable to the host organisation or network as well as to their faith community.

The main characteristics comprise:

- A focus on meeting people where they are both socially and personally;
- Having an empathy and understanding of the context with which they stand in critical solidarity;
- A focus on serving the *missio Dei* in the world rather than on the internal concerns of the institutional church;
- Being rooted and formed in the faith tradition;
- Being open to construct an effective identity as a chaplain in dialogue with the social context within which they are embedded;
- The capacity to be 'multi-lingual' in order to offer and witness to the insights and values of the faith tradition in a culturally plural context in ways which contribute to human flourishing and the common good and so to the flourishing of the kingdom of God.

This profile suggests that the ministerial identity of chaplains is theologically grounded but contextually shaped as the chaplain collaborates with the structures or networks within which they work to offer a contextually responsive ministry of service, critical pastoral care and prophetic witness. I would therefore argue that chaplaincy, at its best, is essentially dialogic. It is constantly in dialogue with different cultures and discourses including those of the church. It is rooted in a deep commitment to human flourishing. It pays attention to people's lived experience accounting it a locus of revelation and it flourishes on the capacity to build relationships of mutual trust and respect. This ministerial orientation is captured in Mark's reflection on the value of the FE chaplaincy in CS3, 'In a sense, the value to the church is that that's really good PR...but in a sense, the value to *humanity* [participant's emphasis] is more important than the value to the church' [Associate Vicar CS3]. To adapt Davie's (1994) categories of production and consumption

versions of religion, chaplaincy arguably offers a consumption version of ministry that can, at best, respond with imagination, creativity, flexibility and integrity to the challenges and opportunities it encounters in a plural society.

However, the characteristic outward facing nature of chaplaincy as a recognised presence beyond the church walls raises the question of the relationship of this genre of ministry with parish-based ministry. I will turn to this question in the next chapter after consideration of the qualities and skills that chaplains may need in order to establish an appropriate and effective identity and practice.

3. Professional integrity: skilled and responsive to challenges and opportunities

Chaplains characteristically work collaboratively with different professional groups and within other people's structures. They also work with vulnerable people such as the instances of elderly, young and homeless people in these studies. If they are to build relationships of trust and mutual respect within their working context then it is important that they work in a safe and professional way that ensures they have appropriate knowledge and skills and that they are accountable and resourced.

Swinton (2003) usefully draws the distinction in relation to Healthcare Chaplaincy between 'professionalism' to which I refer here, and 'professionalisation' which would entail development along the lines of established professions such as medicine or social work in order to achieve recognised professional status. Professionalisation is not at issue here but rather the question of what it means for chaplains to offer a public ministry in a professional way. The diversity of practice and understandings of what it means to be a chaplain described in the studies highlights the importance of articulating elements of the professionalism that is an essential dimension of basic good chaplaincy practice.

At one end of the spectrum the designated chaplaincy role in the YMCA (CS2) has no role description. There is no negotiated understanding with the

organisation of what chaplaincy is and it is seen by those from the church who undertake it as falling within the collective term of 'church work'. At the other end of the spectrum, the Town Centre (CS2), FE and Older People's chaplaincies (CS3) suggest what the appropriate elements of professionalism might include. I will describe the elements with reference to the Older People's Chaplaincy practice as this demonstrates the main components.

Elements of professional chaplaincy practice

Ethical integrity: although there is no code of conduct for chaplains in community contexts, Clare was informed about the ethical issues and boundaries relevant to the context of her work with vulnerable adults.⁷ This is based on a mature understanding of the context.

Knowledge and skills: Clare built on her experience and intuitive understanding of the pastoral and spiritual needs of older people and their carers through reading and training as well as reflecting with others on the nature of her chaplaincy role. This enabled her to create a relevant body of knowledge and skills.

The ability to be self-directing: Clare recognised this as a key attribute of chaplains. Chaplains need to be able to work unsupervised on their own initiative. They need to be able to see and to take opportunities to develop the work with others in imaginative ways.

Accountability: Clare kept a log of her activity and was clear about how she was accountable both in the church and in the community context. Because she was clear about her identity as a chaplain and about the nature and purpose of the role, she was able to represent and to communicate what she was doing to others in both contexts.

Support: Clare was aware of the spiritually and emotionally demanding nature of the work and therefore of the need for ongoing support. She established a small support group comprising people from the parish and met regularly with her line manager to discuss the work.

⁷ The Church of England's policy for safeguarding adults, *Promoting a Safe Church*, can be found at: www.churchofengland.org.

Resources: Clare was able to identify the spiritual, emotional and physical resources that were needed to support the work and to access relevant training when she recognised a need to learn more about a particular aspect.

Although these elements will be developed and expressed in different ways according to context and the basis on which a chaplain works, the data suggest that where they are present, the chaplain is able to develop an effective ministerial presence and identity. They provide some basic parameters within which a chaplain can work safely and with professional integrity. This is particularly important in emergent roles where chaplains can have a significant amount of freedom to be self-directing and to develop the work creatively in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the context. In the case of chaplaincy, the studies suggest that it is the elements of professionalism outlined above that provide the symbiosis between structure and freedom that is fundamental to all creative endeavours. It is the theological and professional integrity of chaplaincy that provides the structure which allows the responsive, proactive entrepreneurial approach which participants in all three case studies cherished as a creative and essential dimension of these types of missional roles and which Hayler (2011) has explored as a significant dimension of chaplaincy.

Bolton and Thompson (2004 cited in Goodhew et al., 2012, p.144) define an entrepreneur as, 'A person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities.' Recognising that some people may dislike the use of the term with its individualistic and market connotations, I contend that the above definition does not preclude collaborative working to build something of recognised value in a community context and that it usefully signals the responsive and proactive nature of chaplaincy. The important point to note is that chaplaincy is not just about responsiveness but about a theologically and professionally informed and skilled responsiveness designed to build something of recognised value.

Chris describes her role in terms of this kind of approach when she says, 'it's constantly evolving depending on what the current circumstances and

problems are and its distinctive in that it's led by what's going on' [Agricultural Chaplain CS1] whilst Annie describes her role in the FE college as being 'very proactive' and 'not prescriptive' compared with her role as a curate which is 'much more prescriptive'. This relates directly to the theological and ecclesial dynamics of chaplaincy which insist on listening to and meeting people where they are in order to be able to make an appropriate response. Todd (2011, p.13) explicitly identifies this as an 'entrepreneurial theology' implying an openness to identify and seize opportunities offered by God, however surprising or 'secular' they appear to be. It also relates to the understanding of chaplaincy as a calling and the fact that not everybody is able or suited to working in this way. Clare reflects that chaplains need, 'that individual drive and personality to...resource their own work, you know to get up and say right, how am I going to tackle today, what do I want to do?' [Older People's Chaplain CS3].

In addition to the individual qualities and skills that a chaplain may require, these studies of the emergence of chaplaincy roles in relation to parochial ministry also suggest that the capacity to develop an effective professional practice relates to the wider ecclesial structures within which the practice is set. This provides evidence for Pickard's (2009, p.30) contention that 'ministry and Church are inextricably linked'. One example is CS3 in which chaplaincy roles are developed within the ecclesial context of an ecumenical project that has articulated its understanding of the place of chaplaincy within its structures and within its mission strategy.

In this instance, chaplaincy is identified as a specialist ministry with its own professional integrity implying the need to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills required to minister in a particular context. John remarks, 'I think the distinctive thing about it is that you're specialising on one aspect of community life and often in a limited number of geographical locations or types of people' [Vicar CS3] whilst Tom makes a direct analogy with healthcare, 'if it was in some kind of healthcare system ... she'd be the specialist who the GP would refer someone to. So the Methodist ministers and the parish priests if you like are the GPs' [Methodist Minister CS3]. The

identification of chaplaincy as a specialist role implies a level of knowledge and commitment for which the parish minister does not usually have the capacity because:

‘it’s not only giving the care but it’s also to do with a lot of what Clare’s doing, with doing the research, reading, attending seminars, networking, contact with all the people who are at the cutting edge of what’s happening, to become, if you like, an expert in that field, to feed that back in to the life of the churches and the Project and the community’ [Methodist Minister CS3].

This understanding of chaplaincy draws on a secular model from the medical profession in order to articulate an ideal interdependent relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry. In so doing it acknowledges the particular knowledge and skills required by chaplains embedded in social contexts but omits any reference to the tensions which may be inherent in the relationship. It is to these tensions that the next chapter will turn.

Chapter summary

Building on the discussion of the theology of mission that underpins chaplaincy in Chapter Seven, this chapter has sought to offer an answer to the vexed question of what makes chaplaincy ‘chaplaincy’. Recognising the problem of terminology and the diverse perceptions of what chaplaincy is, it has worked from a critical realist perspective to describe it as a distinctive genre of ministry with its own identity and integrity even though it may be interpreted in different ways and its contextual responsiveness may mean that it may look very different in different contexts.

The chapter locates the constants of chaplaincy as residing in three core dimensions: its theological integrity rooted in a theology of mission within which chaplains understand their vocation as a continuing part of the sending of God into the world in order to serve God’s mission and so to contribute to human flourishing and to the flourishing of the kingdom; its ministerial identity as a distinctive, representative and recognised ministry that focuses in an

intentional way the call to discipleship of the Christian community; its professional integrity which enables it to establish relationships of trust and mutual respect within a particular context and, equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills, to respond creatively and faithfully to the challenges and opportunities that context presents as part of the church's ecology of mission.

Within the parameters of these dimensions I have offered a more nuanced discussion of the characteristics involved and the sophisticated skills required to negotiate and sustain an effective identity and ministerial presence as a chaplain in a plural social context. As the beginning of the chapter discussed and the data shows, not all designated chaplaincy roles pay explicit or implicit attention to these parameters. However, I suggest that paying attention to these three core dimensions can provide the building blocks for effective ministry and the basis of a narrative for chaplaincy that can be interpreted in both social and ecclesial contexts.

Underlying the whole discussion has been the question of how chaplaincy relates to parish ministry and the institutional church. This is the third main theme identified from the data which will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine

The relationship between chaplaincy and parish-based ministry

Introduction

Chapter Seven suggested that the characteristic missiological impulse of chaplaincy is the quest to participate in the *missio Dei*. Chapter Eight suggested some parameters for this genre of ministry which could enable people to see what chaplaincy might look like if it is to be effective in pursuit of this quest undertaken in the public square. Throughout these discussions the question of how chaplaincy relates to parish ministry and to the mission and ministry of the church as a whole has repeatedly come to the fore as integral to people's understanding and practice of chaplaincy. This suggests that the tensions that exist between the two genres of ministry as noted, for example, by Brown (2011) and Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011b), point to the fact that ministry and understandings of the church are interdependent. As Boff (1977, p.26) notes from a Roman Catholic liberation theology perspective, 'the problem of ministries is linked to the model of church on which it is predicated.' Discussion about the relationship between ministries in this chapter therefore goes hand in hand with attention to ecclesiology.

The fact that the studies are of chaplaincy roles that have emerged within parochial contexts means that the participants have had to think explicitly about the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry. The chapter begins by discussing what has emerged from the data in order to explicate the relational dynamics within people's experience. These findings are then discussed in relation to an ecclesiology of ministry which suggests how chaplaincy could be understood in relation to other ministries and to the mission and ministry of the church as a whole.

The relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry in the case studies

All the chaplains in the case studies participated in the structures of parochial ministry alongside their chaplaincy roles. This obliged all the participants to pay attention to the relationship between the ministries in terms of personal

relationships, theology and ecclesiology. Understandings of this relationship also have practical implications when resource and organisational issues compel people to reflect on how to work together effectively in a changing cultural and ecclesial context as exemplified in CS3.

In CS1, the need to attend to this relationship is not felt acutely because the chaplain is self-supporting, works on her own and is embedded in the farming and rural communities in both her chaplaincy and parochial roles. This means that in practice, the relationship is construed as a personal issue of daily time management: 'I often have to juggle time ... my parishes come first, the chaplaincy role runs alongside it but sometimes there are time issues' [Agricultural Chaplain CS1]. Chris is supported in managing the roles by the church wardens and together they are clear that the parish work takes priority. Even though Chris is deeply committed to the chaplaincy work, the geographically located parochial paradigm holds normative status for ministry. This is endorsed by the fact that she has developed the chaplaincy work on her own initiative. Although the work is highly valued by the community she serves and is personally supported by the Area Bishop, there is no contract or role description and the work therefore has no institutional traction.

In the context of the large team ministry in CS2, complicated relational dynamics between the different genres of ministry emerge. The Team Rector articulates on behalf of the team a foundational model of the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry and the place of chaplaincy within the mission strategy of the whole team. He sees the two genres of ministry as having distinctive foci, 'chaplaincy is mainly intent on making connections with folk beyond church life whereas parish life spends an awful lot of time making connections with folk through parish life' [Team Rector CS2]. He reflects that the primary connections in parish ministry are with people 'who actually come and worship in church' whilst chaplaincy primarily engages with people 'who will probably never attend your church building.' This observation points to the prosaic but significant point of tension noted by Brown (2011, p.3), Director of Mission and Public Affairs for

the Church of England, that 'the parish and its congregation are the basic money-raising structure on which diocesan and national activities rely for resources'. Although chaplaincy is sometimes externally or jointly funded, this remains a significant point of tension which requires the church's relationship with chaplaincy to be at least understandable on the grounds of what it contributes to the mission and ministry of the church if not on the grounds of what it contributes numerically or financially to the building up of the institutional church.

A further tension that Paul describes is that between the *ad extra* missional focus of chaplaincy and the pull to focus *ad intra* experienced by many in parish ministry. He sees the temptation for parish clergy as being that 'we can end up running the show and forget that we're also called to be out in the world' and for chaplains as being that, 'you could actually become almost comfortable being out in the world and so resistant to what the church is for and about that you live your life entirely on the margins' [Team Rector CS2].

This fairly common view of chaplaincy as being on the margins of the church implies a particular understanding of what the church is for. It is grounded in an ecclesiology which understands the church as essentially a geographically-located gathered community. If this is the dominant ecclesiology, then inevitably, chaplaincy will be located on the 'margins'. In contrast, a more dispersed ecclesiology which understood the primary vocation of the church as the quest to participate in the *missio Dei*, might view ministries located in society as the church in the service of God's project for God's world and therefore the engagement in social structures as being central to what the church is for.

Given his role as Team Rector, it is understandable that even though Paul values chaplaincy highly within the team, he offers a clerical-centric view of ministry and the church which relates directly to the way in which chaplaincy roles within the team have been set up. Referring to Jesus' ministry as being spent mostly on the streets but also that he 'knew the value of a spiritual base and a spiritual home', Paul asserts the importance, when making

chaplaincy appointments, of looking to people who have, 'a very distinct sense of calling to a missional chaplaincy-type role but equally who value the life of the church and want to actually have some significant part in the worshipping life of the community and having a spiritual base themselves' [Team Rector CS2]. This ecclesiology of ministry, underpinned by an implicit oppositional dualism between chaplaincy and the church, is structurally embedded in that those appointed to the lead missional and chaplaincy roles were also made Team Vicars. This is seen as crucial from the church's point of view: it is having incumbent status with a church base that validates the chaplaincy role, 'we've given the incipient authority to the role by actually making them priests of incumbent status' [Team Rector CS2].

What emerges from this data is that the ecclesiology of ministry behind this approach establishes a particular relational dynamic between chaplaincy and church-based ministry. Because chaplaincy is viewed as being validated by parish ministry which is given primary status, the tension between the ministries is unintentionally perpetuated. This insight in relation to chaplaincy builds on the contention of Boff (1977) and, from an Anglican perspective, Pickard (2009), that identifying the underlying ecclesiologies that are at work is crucial to understanding how different ministries can work together to bear witness to the gospel. If there is to be creative dialogue between different genres of ministry then understandings of the relationship between Church and ministry need to be articulated or else an often implicit dominant ecclesiology runs the risk of framing as marginal those who hold a different understanding of the relationship between Church and ministry.

Pickard (2009) offers a twofold typology of the relationship between Church and ministry which provides a useful lens through which to analyse the data under discussion. The first type, often associated with the Catholic wing of the Church, emphasises a Christological approach that gives *priority to ministry over Church*. In this account, ministry precedes Church and 'the Church is constituted by a validly and divinely instituted ministerial office that has its origins in Christ's authority and institution' (2009, p.33). The second type gives *priority to Church and Pneumatology*. Within this approach,

ministry is 'an emergent *charism*-generated activity of the whole Church. The community of faith, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit receives and exercises the gifts of God for the common good, witness and service: the mission of the Church' (2009, p.36). According to Pickard, this approach destabilises traditional conceptions of the relationship which have tended to prioritise the authority of ministry.

Pickard suggests that where the emphasis is on one or other of these approaches, difficulties arise. Where the first is emphasised, the authority of ministerial office is accentuated and ministry can become focused on the clergy bestowing an undue self-importance on them such that attempts to relate this ministry to other ministries 'inevitably diminish the latter' (2009, p.39). Where the second is emphasised, there is openness to a wide scope of lay and ordained ministries but the difficulty is achieving a proper differentiation. Pickard contends that we need to get beyond a view of ministry as separate from the collective life of the Church and to conceive the two as integrated: 'Ministry arises in and is given with the reality of the Church. The Church arises in and is given with the reality of the ministry' (2009, p.42). In this conception, ministry is understood as 'action for and on behalf of the Church' and the church is understood as, 'an organic community, where ministerial differentiation contributes to and does not diminish the unity and coherence of the whole body' (2009, p.42).

In CS2 where, in terms of this typology, the organising approach emphasises the priority of ministry over Church, the implications for the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry are evident. In practice, because the authority of chaplaincy within the team is conceived as derivative from parish ministry, chaplains who have a strong sense of the inherent validity of their role have to work with a structurally-embodied relational dynamic that has to be constantly negotiated within the church context and the team. For example, Jenny reflects:

‘I have colleagues who refer to what I do as “sector ministry” although I actually regard church ministry, conventional ministry, as “sector ministry”. For me, the sector is ... in here rather than out there’ [Community Missioner, Police Chaplain and Team Vicar CS2].

Stuart notes that when the chaplains do attend team meetings, ‘The team meeting tends to be about parish stuff and they’ll be like a colourful interjection’ [Homeless Charity and Team Vicar CS2]. In a church context, Kate’s experience of having a dual role as Chaplain and Team Vicar is that, ‘having the two roles is very difficult’ and that church members also find it difficult, ‘they think they should have a priest to themselves’ and that ‘the two don’t sit well together’ [Town Centre Chaplain CS2].

This tension only emerges in relation to the church where designated chaplaincy roles are differentiated. Where the work is understood not as a differentiated ministry but as an extension of church work, as in the involvement with the YMCA in CS2, there is no tension from the church point of view but neither are there any parameters by virtue of which chaplaincy can be recognised as chaplaincy within the public domain. Peter describes the particular ecclesiology that shapes his church’s vision for involvement with the YMCA. Rather than speaking of the quest to participate in the *missio Dei*, he speaks about establishing church-related communities in specific locations outside church buildings. The parish calls these communities ‘DNAs’ which stands for Discipleship in Action and the work in the YMCA is seen in terms of this model:

‘we see this as a DNA so it’s a community in its own right, it’s still attached to the church of course, but it’s got a freedom to do what it thinks is necessary in order to do the ministry so we do have some kind of ecclesiological framework for what they are’ [YMCA CS2].

The church’s intention is to develop more of these communities and Peter thinks that the work at the YMCA will help to inform how they go about that. There is also a Pioneer Minister attached to the church who intends to

develop his role in the YMCA by developing more visiting during the day. Individual visiting is equated with chaplaincy work and this is described as 'a bit more chaplaincy work'. The church also wants to encourage YMCA residents 'to come to a pioneer service, a kind of Fresh Expression in the pub'. It is clear in this instance, that none of the parameters for chaplaincy described in the previous chapter have been considered. There is no differentiated chaplaincy role that is publicly recognised and validated and there is no appropriate accountability to the organisation as well as to the faith community. There is no conceptual clarity about the different ministries or the relationships between them and how they might work together. Chaplaincy is described as 'an easy label' for the YMCA to understand and Peter can see no difference between how he might work as a chaplain and as a parish minister. When asked about the distinctiveness of the ministries he reflects:

'(long pause) I'm not sure I know if there's a difference ... we would like to build contacts there between people, residents there and our church, and we manage to do that. On the other hand, as a church we're not bound by ministry in our buildings so we're quite happy to see something spring up there...just for the YMCA' [YMCA CS2].

Although Peter does say that the primary focus of the work is to build relationships and foster hope, it appears that the ecclesial perspective and agenda is dominant and that chaplaincy is undifferentiated as a genre of ministry. The involvement in the organisation is subsumed under the aegis of 'church work'. In this instance, there is no conceptual clarity: none of the stake-holders know what chaplaincy is.

The research evidence shows that once the theological foundations and ministerial identity of chaplaincy are described and made explicit so that chaplaincy can be recognised as a distinctive genre of ministry, the issue of how it relates to the work of the whole church in theory and practice is brought into sharp focus. Is chaplaincy seen as a valid genre of ministry in its own right, one that makes a valuable contribution to the mission of the

church, or is it seen as a distraction from how the church understands its 'core business' and one which can potentially divert resources away from parish ministry?

This question resonates throughout CS3 where the church context is a much more bounded and culturally homogenous community than the plural urban context of CS2. In this instance, the Methodist and Anglican churches in the town engaged in a conscious process of theological reflection and structural reorganisation in order to develop a strategy for mission and service in the community in the light of parochial reorganisation and reduced numbers of clergy. Here there is an explicit recognition of the inter-relationship between theology, ecclesiology and ministry:

'I think the theology is that God is concerned about everybody and those of us who are called are called to be concerned about everybody ... that's the underlying principle which then feeds the ecclesiology, which then feeds looking for an approach that's going to do that' [Vicar CS3].

Beginning with an understanding that the calling of the church is to serve the mission of God in the world, an ecumenical project was developed as the most effective way to witness to the gospel in this context. Following on from this, the need to think strategically about how to engage missionally with the community so that the church could make a real contribution to the common good led to the development of the model of ministry discussed above in which staff took on functional responsibility rather than responsibility for a particular church. Within this model, chaplaincy was developed as one way in which the church could engage missionally in key areas of community life. Because chaplains had a particular focus for their ministry, they were seen as having a specialist ministry which, ideally, could not only contribute to their particular context but could also feed back into the life of the church. In theory, this specialist role would not lead to the isolation or marginalisation of the chaplain in relation to the church but would be a conduit through which accumulated wisdom, knowledge and skills could flow between contexts.

In this model, chaplaincy roles are seen as part of the overall ecumenical mission strategy of the church. Chaplaincy is recognised as a valid genre of ministry in its own right, deriving its authority within the project and the community not primarily from clerical orders or from having a particular church role but from the skill with which chaplains bear authentic witness in their role to the Christian life and tradition:

‘I think that’s one of the reasons that the work that we’re doing has become so successful because it’s seen as being owned by a number of churches, a number of people and that gives it the weight and authority that one individual church wouldn’t have had on its own’ [Methodist Minister CS2].

However, although chaplaincy has an explicitly recognised place within the strategic vision for the work, the parish is still made up of individual churches and congregations and tensions still inhabit the relationship between the chaplaincy model of ministry focused in social structures and the traditional model of ministry focused in church structures. This poses the challenge to find effective ways of communicating about the chaplaincy work within the church communities.

Both Tom and John in CS3 speak of the need to address church members’ perceptions of chaplaincy. John reflects that congregations may perceive the chaplains to be doing the work for them ‘which therefore relieves them of any responsibility to do anything’ [Vicar CS3] unless the chaplains try to connect the congregations with the chaplaincy work. Tom relates that when the need for a chaplain for older people was originally suggested, one perception was that ‘it’s just an excuse for the ministers to stop visiting older people’ [Methodist Minister CS3]. Because the Older People’s Chaplain works collaboratively across the community, that original anxiety was soon assuaged. However, this does point to the importance of recognising and attending to the different perceptions and anxieties there may be within the church communities however well worked out in theory a strategic vision for the relationship between the ministries may be.

The research evidence suggests that it may be more difficult to achieve a functional integration of chaplaincy roles with parish ministry when the chaplaincy is located within a bounded institution. For example Mark, who supervises the FE Chaplain, recognises that the chaplaincy 'could go on almost entirely divorced from the life of the parish'. He perceives the reality to be, 'there isn't a huge amount of interaction between the established churches based on a parochial model and the chaplaincy that they're supporting'. Even though ministry with older people is shared with the Older People's Chaplain and is therefore much more integrated with parish life, Paul thinks, 'there's a long way to go in integrating this model with day to day parish ministry'. He recognises the importance of this happening in order to foster a sense of the work being owned by the parish and the Methodist Church. Members of the churches may well ask, 'Why are we doing this?' and 'What do we get for our money?' so it is important to foster an understanding of the vision for the work. However, this is a real challenge given how little time ministers have to commit to an intentional process of education and integration.

Mark also reflects on the challenges that chaplaincy presents to the churches. Because chaplains work in other people's structures and have to think through theologically what they are doing, he thinks that 'chaplains have a much clearer idea about what they think they're doing than the rest of the parish' and that their understanding of a particular context can challenge the churches in relation to how they engage with people's lived experience. They present, 'challenges about how we see the world and also about how we see particular groups of people...My guess is that we're not in a particularly good position to even see the challenges' [Associate Vicar CS3].

John is also aware that implementing this new way of working requires a lot of time and energy given the challenges that it poses and the new patterns of relating that it requires. His experience is that people in the churches may not see the need for change and even if they do, they may prefer not to embrace it given the losses that any change entails. Communication and education are key if this functional model is to work and this is not easy.

Although much effort is put into communication with people in the churches through such things as articles and news sheets, the effect of this depends on people being interested and reading the information. In John's experience, this level of interest cannot be assumed, 'in a typical parish congregation where ... a lot of people just come and worship and that's their entire commitment' [Vicar CS3].

This spirals back to the core issue that unless people understand the rationale for chaplaincy they are unlikely to see why they should support or resource it. It is not easy to communicate this given the challenges that chaplaincy presents to which people may be resistant: 'So it is a challenge to congregations to have that level of vision, to look outward rather than inward ... and I think that's a big ask really' [Vicar CS3].

Not only does chaplaincy present this prophetic challenge to the churches but it also presents a managerial challenge within this model of working. Because the roles have been set up outside church structures, a time-consuming proactive management approach has to be adopted in order to keep in touch and prevent them becoming completely separate from the parish. This means that John has less time to fulfil traditionally expected dimensions of the clergy role such as pastoral visiting. For some church members, this is seen as a significant loss.

The data from CS3 suggest that even within this more ecumenical ecclesiology where chaplaincy is recognised as holding a valid place within the church's ecology of mission, the relationship between the dynamics of chaplaincy and those of ministry within church structures remains challenging. John is also aware that the tensions that are lived with at the parish level are mirrored, in the Anglican Church, at the national level. He reflects that if the church is to respond effectively to cultural change by developing a mixed economy of ministry that includes chaplaincy, then the vision for ministry, its structures and priorities, will need to change. Also, the need to provide appropriate training and support for those who initiate and drive change will have to be recognised. He notes how the theological,

structural, cultural, financial and historical privileging of parish-based ministry in the Church of England has resulted in chaplaincy having had:

‘a very unfortunate history with all sorts of posts being cut; whenever there’s pressure, cut the chaplaincy post, cut the stuff at the centre, and of course all that does is leave isolated individual ministers with no support who really do have to do everything and do things poorly because you can’t do everything and be everywhere. So you do require vision at the real centre, as to what you’re actually doing’
[Vicar CS3].

Current thinking within the Church of England may indicate a dawning recognition of this requirement (Cf. Footnote 1, p.7).

The data from the three case studies reveal from a variety of perspectives the tensions that exist between the ministries. Building on the ecclesiological insights of Boff (1977) and the ministerial insights of Pickard (2009), I suggest that there is a deep interconnection between understandings of church and the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry. The research evidence suggests the constant pull of an implicit and deep rooted dualism that locates chaplaincy as a specialist ministry in the public square that is marginal to or separate from ‘the church’. This characterisation of chaplaincy as marginal to the church often features in discourse about chaplaincy including the self-understanding of chaplains. Todd (2011, p.13) notes this phenomenon with its attendant dangers of isolation for chaplains and lack of understanding and support from the church. In order to mitigate this splitting, Todd (2011, p.14) suggests that instead of chaplaincy being seen as marginal, it should be seen as being at ‘the heart of the self-understanding of the church’, modelling church as a distinct, collaborative and dialogic ‘way of participating in civil society.’

Drawing on the above discussion, I suggest that a narrative of chaplaincy that could make sense to the church needs to represent chaplaincy as: rooted in a theology of mission that locates it as central to the vocation of the

contemporary church; a distinctive ministry that provides an important way in which the church can live its vocation in the world; rooted in an integrative ecclesiology of ministry that does not prioritise ministry over Church or Church and pneumatology over ministry but recognises the essential interweaving of ministry and Church remembering that 'the point of the ministries of the ecclesia of God is to enhance the Church's witness through word and deed to the ways of God in the world' (Pickard, 2009, p.43). With such an understanding, each genre of ministry could be seen as part of the 'charism-generated activity of the whole church' (2009, p.36). Their differentiation could be seen as holding the potential to make a contribution to the whole rather than one genre of ministry diminishing another in any way.

Perceived in this way, chaplaincy ceases to look like a valuable but ultimately dispensable genre of ministry and starts to configure as one that is becoming an increasingly important part of the church's identity and mission. It moves from being conceptualised as marginal to the church to being conceptualised as integral and distinct. Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011b, p.38) even suggest that chaplaincy may be becoming a more normative form of ministry for the church than traditional parochial models. As I have argued, the recent growth in chaplaincy-type roles is marked enough to be studied as a distinct phenomenon in its own right. However, as the research evidence shows, precisely because of its entrepreneurial and missional approach and its characteristic location within social structures, chaplaincy presents significant challenges to the institutional church.

The ecclesiology of chaplaincy discussed above seeks to understand where God is at work in the world and how to collaborate with that work. This understanding and the development of effective ways of working in the public square could enrich the life of the whole church but as Mark suggests in CS3, it is not clear that the church is in a place where it can hear the challenges that chaplaincy presents. This is not new. From a historical perspective, Brown (2011, p.6) reminds us that the contentious missiological conviction of Leslie Hunter and Ted Wickham, founders of the Industrial

Mission movement, was not that God was absent from working life and the church was needed to hallow it but that God was incarnate in human activity and that working people understood this and spoke of it in their own way. They argued that the church was failing to connect with this 'secular theology'. The 'mission' was mission to the church.

Referring to Masumoto's typology, (Masumoto, 1987 cited in Brown, 2011, p.6) Brown (2011, p.6) suggests that this conception of mission sought to address the 'theological gap between the church and the kingdom of God' rather than 'the sociological gap between the church and the world'. Brown (2011) suggests that in this respect, contemporary chaplaincy at its best bears a similarity to the best of Fresh Expressions which, rather than asking how to get people to come to church, ask how the church can better reflect the nature of God to the people. The taxing question, he suggests, is whether the institutional church understands its mission as this quest to participate in the *missio Dei* or whether, in its current nervousness about its survival into the future, its understanding has been captured more by secular success criteria and surrender to methods such as business models.

In this chapter I have presented chaplaincy as a valuable way of being church in the world today. Building on Boff's (1977) reflections in relation to base communities, perhaps chaplaincy could be understood as being in *counterpoint* to the church as institution. As Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2022b, p.40) contend, chaplaincy offers a way of living out 'more comprehensively than is possible in a purely geographically based system' the church's vision of a universal ministry to all people. They call for it to be viewed as a normative and valuable part of the mission of the church. I have argued that for this to happen, the integrity of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry needs to be described and acknowledged and the ecclesiologies in play need to be made explicit. If this groundwork can be done, then there is a chance that the relationships between the ministries can be understood and developed creatively in the service of God's mission in the world.

Chapter summary

This chapter has explicated some of the relational dynamics evidenced in the data as the basis for an exploration of the complex relationships that exist in different contexts between chaplaincy and parish-based ministry. I have shown how understandings of church relate directly to how different ministries are understood and practised and thus to how the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry is conceptualised and lived. Even when there is a strategic vision that recognises the place of chaplaincy within the church's ecology of mission, tensions still arise in the attempt to live out an ecclesial reality where different genres of ministry can work together on the basis of mutual respect and understanding for the sake of the gospel. Building on Pickard (2009) I have suggested that a genuine dialogue between chaplains and the institutional church might best be fostered within an integrative view of ministry and Church where church is understood as an organic community within which 'charism-generated' ministries arise and where the different genres of ministry are seen not as competing for diminishing resources but as contributing to the flourishing of the whole.

I have argued that in order to have this kind of conversation at either the national or the local level, chaplaincy does need to be able to describe the basis of its identity and integrity. If no one is clear what makes chaplaincy 'chaplaincy' the conversation cannot take place. In addition to this, the ecclesiologies and missiologies that are in play in a context need to be excavated so that the implications for the relationships between the ministries have a chance of being understood. If the intertwining of theology, ecclesiology and ministry is not acknowledged, any difficulties that there may be between the ministries have little chance of being resolved.

This kind of conversation is not easy. If the relationships between the ministries are to change then structures, perceptions and ways of working may have to change too. As CS3 exemplifies, this is challenging for all concerned and requires a high level of commitment and investment of energy. However, the institutional church has recognised the need to change and diversify in order to respond faithfully to the changing culture and

is beginning to glimpse the potential of chaplaincy in the service of God's mission. The Church of England is in the midst of rethinking the structures of ministry. I suggest that if it could be offered and begin to read a narrative for chaplaincy then a recognition of the value of and need for chaplaincy as part of the church's ecology of mission could be part of that process. The contribution that this research may make to that process is discussed in Chapter Ten.

Part Four summary

In Part Four I have brought the main themes identified through the data analysis into dialogue with the theoretical perspectives explored through the literature in Chapter One. The discussion of the themes has related the growth in chaplaincy with the contemporary cultural context and the need for the church to meet the missional challenge to respond to cultural change. I have highlighted the current lack of conceptual clarity about what chaplaincy is. I have argued that if it is to have a voice in conversations about mission and ministry at local and national levels and to develop and sustain best practice, chaplaincy needs to be able to describe the basis of its identity and integrity. A prerequisite of genuine dialogue and/or collaboration in any context is differentiation.

The interpretation and discussion of the themes suggests a missing narrative for chaplaincy which has three main elements: theological integrity, ministerial identity and professional integrity. In terms of practice, I have suggested that these elements provide parameters within which chaplaincy best practice can be developed and sustained.

Part Five will discuss the significance of this differentiated understanding of chaplaincy for practice.

PART FIVE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH FOR PRACTICE

Chapter Ten

Making a difference to practice

The research process has brought insights from missiology and ecclesiology and understandings of the contemporary cultural context into critical dialogue with an analysis of the empirical data and insights from my own phronesis in order to generate new insight into the recent growth in chaplaincy. This new knowledge has provided a basis for proposing the fresh significance of this phenomenon for the mission and ministry of the church. This chapter uses the insights that have been generated through the research process as a foundation for describing how the research can contribute to the development of my own practice and to the practice and policy of the church in England.

The research has represented multiple perspectives on chaplaincy and in so doing has uncovered a spectrum of confusion about what chaplaincy is and how it relates to other genres of ministry and to the mission of the church in the 21st Century. It has shown that currently there is a lack of conceptual clarity about what makes chaplaincy 'chaplaincy'. I have argued that it is therefore not surprising that the voices of chaplains are rarely heard and that it lacks representation within the missional and ministerial discourses of the institutional church.

The process has identified the current lack of an ecclesiological, theological or ministerial narrative for chaplaincy that enables it to be located and understood in the context of the mission and ministry of the whole church. This has uncovered the need to construct such a narrative based on an analysis of the empirical data in critical dialogue with relevant theoretical perspectives from theology and other disciplines and with my own phronesis. The research evidence suggests that if chaplaincy is to be developed and resourced effectively, it is necessary to describe its theological and

professional integrity and its ministerial identity in order to propose basic parameters which need to be considered if a certain ministerial practice is to be meaningfully identified as chaplaincy. The study describes these parameters as a foundation for developing my own practice of enabling the support and development of chaplaincy praxis and for the representation of chaplaincy within the central discourses of the church.

In Part Four the discussion of the three main themes developed from the research evidence identified three central propositions:

1. The recent growth of chaplaincy roles in community contexts is a distinct phenomenon that represents a practitioner response to the missional challenge that the changing culture presents to the church and that locates chaplaincy as central to the mission of the church in the service of the *missio Dei*.
2. Chaplaincy in community contexts is a distinctive genre of ministry with its own ministerial identity and theological and professional integrity.
3. The description of the identity and integrity of chaplaincy in community contexts provides a basis for the implicit ecclesiologies within chaplaincy and parish ministry to be explicated so that understanding of the relationship between different ministries can be developed. This could enable genuine dialogue to take place and the voice of chaplaincy to be heard and valued within the missiological and ministerial discourses of the church as an integral but distinct genre of ministry within the church's ecology of mission.

These propositions point to the potential significance of this research both for my own practice and for the wider policy and practices of the church. In this chapter I will explicate the significance for practice in both these contexts. I will describe how the research has already made a difference to my own practice and a contribution to strategic thinking about chaplaincy before reflecting on the significance of the research journey for my own professional learning and development.

The significance of the research for my own practice: a proposed agenda for development

This research was designed to privilege the voices of Christian ministers, lay or ordained, who either practice as or support chaplains in community contexts. The majority of participants combined chaplaincy with parish-based ministry and developed a chaplaincy role as an entrepreneurial missional response to perceived opportunities for engagement with a particular context. Chapter Eight discussed how the characteristic entrepreneurial approach of chaplaincy is important for the initial development of roles. However, the research evidence suggests that if best practice is to be developed and sustained, people also need to be aware of the different dimensions of chaplaincy and to have opportunity to reflect with others on what makes chaplaincy 'chaplaincy'. Without some level of clarity about what the term means, the way lies open for others to define the meaning on their own terms rather than in genuine dialogue with practitioners and the faith community. Providing such an opportunity would enable practitioners and those who work with them to develop and sustain best practice that can make a valuable and faithful contribution to human flourishing and the common good within the church's ecology of mission.

The creation of a developmental consultancy model

I state in Chapter One (Cf. p.4) that my current practice involves finding ways to enable people to reflect on and develop chaplaincy practice. Providing consultancy could be an effective way to do this. In order to provide a structured opportunity for people to think through the dimensions of chaplaincy and how best to develop it in a context, I therefore propose using the research findings as the foundation for the creation of a developmental consultancy model. This could be used to support deaneries, churches, teams and individuals who are thinking about setting up chaplaincy roles. It could also provide a useful process for people already engaged in chaplaincy who recognise the need to reflect intentionally on the work in order to develop it and themselves more fully. I envisage that this process could also lead to the need to develop the provision of pastoral supervision for

chaplains providing opportunity for groups and individuals to reflect on and so to transform practice (Slater, 2011c, p.15) as part of their continuing professional development.

In Chapter Eight I drew on the research evidence in order to propose three dimensions of chaplaincy that need to be thought about in relation to practice. These provide parameters within which chaplaincy praxis could be delineated and recognised. These are summarised in Table 10.1 below.

Dimension	Main Characteristics
Theological Integrity	Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving the <i>missio Dei</i> • Building up the Kingdom of God • Contributing to human & social flourishing & the common good
Ministerial Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative role focusing the vocation of the church to serve God's mission in the world • Embedded in social structures • Publicly recognised & validated • Appropriately accountable to host context & faith community
Professional Integrity	Works in a professional way in order to offer a knowledgeable, skilled & contextually responsive ministry

Table 10.1: Dimensions of chaplaincy praxis

The proposed consultancy model is derived from the research and would use these dimensions to provide a structure to support people through a process of reflection. In accord with the practical theological method which begins and ends with practice, the approach would be developmental rather than regulatory. It would begin with people's practice and enable them to develop their understanding of chaplaincy within the wider dimensions of the role in the contemporary cultural and ecclesial context in order to be able to develop and transform practice. In any given context, the main gatekeeper would be identified followed by the stakeholders. The consultancy purpose and process would then be explained and discussed with all involved. The process would use relevant questions in order to ensure that the basic

dimensions of chaplaincy (Table 10.1) identified through the research were addressed. These questions would be based on the schedules of questions (Appendix G) tested out in the investigation. A possible structure and questions that could provide the basis of a developmental consultancy model is outlined at Appendix H.

The kind of consultancy process indicated above will need to be fully developed and piloted. The strength of this kind of approach is that it can provide the space where people can reflect together intentionally on the different aspects of chaplaincy practice and so make explicit the theologies, ecclesiologies and assumptions that often remain implicit in practice. This offers the potential for mutually enriching dialogue to take place. As CS2 and CS3 show in particular, tensions between chaplaincy and parish ministry can signal the need for genuine dialogue to take place. I recognise that this necessarily requires everyone involved to be willing to engage in dialogue and that the way in which the process is introduced will play an important part in eliciting commitment and a willingness to engage. It is hoped that by taking a process approach, rooted in practice, mutual understanding and trust could be built between colleagues enabling the necessary level of openness to the other required for dialogue to take place.

In my current practice, I have no specific framework or process that I can use to enable people to develop chaplaincy praxis. The creation of a developmental consultancy model would make a marked difference to my practice by providing a framework that I can offer people to enable them to think through the dimensions of chaplaincy and the development of their practice based on the insights and knowledge generated by this research.

The research evidence has shown that the kind of dialogue that this consultancy model hopes to generate is needed not only in the local context of practice but also in the wider context of the relationship between chaplaincy and the policy and practice of the institutional church. I now turn to consider the significance of the research in this wider context.

The significance of the research for the policy and practice of the Church

The research began with a perception of the growth in chaplaincy-type roles and a lack of representation of chaplaincy within the missiological and ministerial discourses of the church. A main purpose of the research was to generate new insight into the significance of the phenomenon of growth for the mission and ministry of the church as a basis for developing dialogue and understanding between chaplaincy and the institutional church. I describe below how throughout the research process, I have actively sought to generate conversation and dialogue between practitioners themselves and between practitioners and the institutional church.

The research invites the institutional church to engage with this phenomenon in order to clarify its understanding of the theology and praxis of chaplaincy as well as the nature of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry and its relationship with other genres of ministry in the service of the *missio Dei*. Such an engagement would raise significant practical and policy issues relating to structures, authorisation, resources and training that, as I discuss below, the church is just beginning to acknowledge. This thesis therefore provides a conduit through which the voices of certain chaplains can be heard whilst proposing a missing narrative of chaplaincy on the basis of which dialogue can be developed. I will now describe some of the ways in which the research process has afforded opportunities for that dialogue to be undertaken.

The facilitation of dialogue and reflection on practice

Presentation of the research as work in progress at the 2010 national Faith in Research conference (Slater, 2010a) for those involved in church related research contributed to the profiling of a chaplaincy research stream at the conferences. Similar presentations at the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology (BIAPT) conferences (Slater, 2010b; Slater, 2011d) enabled me to contribute to the representation of chaplaincy research. Through these presentations I could also test out the research in the public arena and therefore the feedback contributed to validating the research. In

2011 this renewed profiling of chaplaincy within BIAPT enabled me to convene a Chaplaincy Special Interest Group which now has a Facebook page to which BIAPT members and practitioners can contribute. By these means the research has been able to make a small contribution to the development of chaplaincy as a field of study and a community of practice (Slater, 2011c). I have also been able to engage directly with groups of practitioners, for example the national gathering of Rural Officers in November 2012, in order to present my research and to facilitate reflection on what it means to be a chaplain.

As part of the BIAPT initiative mentioned above, in April 2012 I initiated a joint OXCEPT/BIAPT conference for practising chaplains called *From Practice to Policy: Theological Reflection on Being a Chaplain*. Over fifty chaplains from a wide variety of contexts attended. The intention was to provide a forum in which practitioners could share experiences and reflect together on practice. Opportunity to move the reflection into dialogue with the Church was provided by inviting the Church of England's Director of Mission and Public Affairs to be one of the speakers along with myself (Slater, 2012a) and the Chair of BIAPT.

Contributing to church commissioned research designed to inform policy and strategy

The interest in and prevalence of chaplaincy work evinced by this conference affirmed the importance of this genre of ministry as, along with other denominations, the Church of England is beginning to recognise the extent of chaplaincy. With this recognition has come the realisation that it needs to know the extent and nature of its involvement. The Director of Mission and Public Affairs has since commissioned a collaborative research project for the Church of England that I am undertaking jointly with the Director of the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies. This has been designed to build on my doctoral research in order to investigate the Church of England's involvement in chaplaincy as the basis for recommendations as to how chaplaincy can be supported and developed as part of its strategy for mission and ministry. The research report is due in December 2013.

The reference group for this research project includes the Church of England's Directors of Education, Ministry, and Mission and Public Affairs and a representative from the House of Bishops among others. This therefore continues the dialogue between chaplaincy and the institutional church at a strategic policy level. As a development of my doctoral research it holds out the possibility for the voice of chaplaincy to be represented within the discourses of the institution and for making a difference to how practice is understood and resourced. The commissioned research could also be generative of further qualitative and quantitative research such as a diocesan audit of chaplaincy. This fulfils the initial intention that this doctoral research should be generative of further questions and avenues of research and that it might help 'to raise the profile of chaplaincy as an important strategic resource within the church' (Slater 2011c, p.16). In terms of my own practice, this commission has also enabled OxCEPT to develop a collaboration with the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies.

The case studies revealed the need for parameters for chaplaincy to be established if the term is to have meaningful content. This challenges the church to think strategically about how that might be done. If chaplaincy is recognised by the institutional church as an integral but distinct genre of ministry it raises the question of whether or not chaplaincy in community contexts needs to be an 'authorised' ministry and what the most appropriate approach to training and support might be. The Church of England research can be seen as a first step towards that thinking.

Contributing to the development of ministerial training

The Church of England is currently re-thinking its strategy for ministry (Cf. Footnote 1, p.7) and its training provision for authorised ministries. For the first time, chaplaincy is being acknowledged in both these projects. Throughout this research process I have sought to highlight the need for chaplaincy to be considered in relation to ministerial training. A significant

percentage of parish clergy ⁸ will at some point find themselves occupying chaplaincy-type roles, by choice or otherwise, and some people training for authorised ministries understand their vocation as being to chaplaincy work. As a result of this research, in January 2013 I was invited to join the Ministry Working Group tasked with designing part of a new curriculum for ministerial training for the Common Awards for ministry scheduled to be in place for 2014. This offered the opportunity to contribute to writing a chaplaincy training module which would recognise the integrity of chaplaincy as a genre of ministry and give it representation within the ministerial discourse of the church. Meanwhile, at a local level, I have been able to present my research to ordinands at Ripon College Cuddesdon and to MTh students in Oxford (Slater, 2013).

However, in the context of a dawning institutional acknowledgement of the significance of chaplaincy, it is important here to restate that chaplaincy presents significant challenges to the institutional church. Inevitably there will be points of tension that will need to be addressed in any dialogue not least in relation to how chaplaincy may be resourced. This tension has been acknowledged throughout this thesis and the relationship with parish-based ministry was one of the three main themes developed from the data and discussed in Chapter Nine. The research evidence suggests that as conversations develop, there will be difficult issues to wrestle with relating to structures, governance and resources as evinced in CS3. Although my work in research and practice development may contribute to the development of professional practice, it is significant that as a practitioner I remain 'marginal' to the institution and that at present, the Church of England remains reluctant to resource chaplaincy directly, notwithstanding the research that it has commissioned.

The significance of the research for my own learning and development

When I undertook the initial chaplaincy Scoping Study in 2009 (Slater, 2009), I had extensive experience of healthcare chaplaincy but limited direct

⁸ There are no accurate church statistics that enable me to cite a definite percentage. An estimate would be 10% - 15% but it may be more than this.

experience of chaplaincy in different community contexts. As I explored this kind of chaplaincy I began to realise the extent of its social reach and the lack of conceptual clarity about what chaplaincy in community contexts looked like, what chaplains were doing, what chaplains thought they were doing and how this related to what the church was doing or thought it was doing. I also realised that there was little literature or research on which I could draw for help in thinking about this topic. Faced with such scope and diversity, the first challenge was to find some theoretical perspectives which would help me to think about the phenomenon and then to find a research approach that would enable me to find a focus for what seemed like a large research task in order to generate useful data.

At the beginning of the process, it was not clear how I would find a way of moving beyond the narration of individual practices in specific contexts in order to make sense of the recent growth in chaplaincy. However, it seemed to me that there must be commonalities that could be discerned which, when identified, would point to the significance of this phenomenon for the contemporary church.

I have described in this thesis the theoretical perspectives from missiology, and ecclesiology and from understandings of contemporary culture which I was able to bring into critical dialogue with the empirical data and with my own phronesis to enable me to discern commonalities and the choice of the case study approach that enabled me to find an appropriate focus for the work. It would, in fact, be accurate to describe the research journey as a three year process of bringing chaplaincy into focus: in my own understanding and for my own practice; for practitioners; and in relation to the institutional church. Initially I saw only a poorly conceptualised amorphous practice; I can now see a practice and genre of ministry that can be represented as having its own distinct integrity and which lives out the church's vocation to serve the *missio Dei* in the world.

My involvement in the research process has made a difference to my own practice in several ways. The research training and development that I have

received through the Professional Doctorate programme and Anglia Ruskin University has significantly developed and broadened my knowledge and skills as a researcher. This has included learning to use NVivo 9 software as a tool to help with the handling and analysis of large amounts of qualitative data. However, at a much deeper level, participation in the research process has developed my understanding of what it means to be a reflexive qualitative researcher. It has also deepened my understanding of the writing process and of myself as a writer as well as my understanding of the creative, interpretive nature of the writing process in the context of qualitative research.

The knowledge generated by the research has given me new insight into and deeper understanding of chaplaincy in community contexts. The research data has provided me with a knowledge base from which to develop my practice, as described above, with its remit to enable the development and sustainability of good chaplaincy practice. It has also enabled me to provide a conduit for the voices of chaplains so that chaplaincy can be represented at strategic and policy levels within the church.

Invitations to speak and to facilitate reflection on practice and opportunities to present my work at conferences and seminars have enabled me to disseminate the research, to refine my thinking in response to feedback and to develop an understanding of chaplaincy as integral to but distinct within the mission and ministry of the church. The conversations that have been opened within this process have led to my involvement in the further research and the development of ministerial training that I describe above. The research process has broadened the scope of my practice and provided a platform for chaplaincy to be represented in a variety of contexts where this otherwise would not have been the case. It has also generated new avenues of research and given me insight into the strategic importance and potential impact of research within processes of change.

Chapter summary

This chapter began with a summary of what the research has shown and went on to re-present the three main propositions developed through the research process as a basis for describing the significance of the research for my own practice and professional development and for the policy and practices of the wider church. It has outlined three main outcomes of the research represented as three contributions to professional practice:

1. The proposed creation of a developmental consultancy model based on the dimensions of chaplaincy identified through the data analysis. This would enable me to offer people a structure and a process for thinking through the development of chaplaincy praxis thus making a significant difference to my own practice.
2. Undertaking a Church of England commissioned collaborative research project designed to inform future policy and strategy. This is designed to build on my doctoral research thus enabling it to contribute to thinking about policy and practice within the church and fulfilling its intention to generate further research.
3. Writing a chaplaincy module for the Common Awards ministerial training curriculum in England. This opportunity could enable the new insights that I have developed into the significance of chaplaincy in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church to contribute to the development of chaplaincy training. Along with the second contribution, this fulfils the purpose of the research to enable chaplaincy to find representation within the central discourses of the church in England.

In presenting the actual and potential contributions that the research can make to practice and policy based on the new knowledge that it has developed, this chapter has shown that the main purpose of the research as stated in Chapter One has been fulfilled: 'to generate new insight into the significance of the growth in and practice of chaplaincy for the mission and ministry of the church in order to contribute to knowledge, policy and

practice' (Cf. p.5). It has also shown, as signalled in the Introduction to Chapter One, that the central requirement of the Anglia Ruskin Professional Doctorate of 'making a difference' to practice (Anglia Ruskin University, 2010) has been met.

Chapter Eleven

Conclusions

The origins and purpose of the research

The professional context of this study is my research and development role at OxCEPT which holds a particular remit to enable the development of chaplaincy praxis. I describe in the introduction how this project began with the recognition that over the past decade there has been a marked but unquantified growth in the development of chaplaincy-type roles in community contexts and that this has been accompanied by a recent resurgence of interest in chaplaincy from several church denominations. This prompted me to ask why this was happening at this particular time.

A subsequent scoping study and search of the literature enabled me to identify this growth as an emerging issue with no literature or directly related research. The literature search enabled me to identify theoretical perspectives from missiology, ecclesiology and ministry and understandings of the contemporary cultural milieu that were likely to be relevant to the topic. These perspectives, in dialogue with my own phronesis, informed the formulation of the main research question and the consequent research design. The main research question was: *What is the significance of the recent development of chaplaincy practice in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church in England?* An answer to this question would make a contribution to knowledge in an unresearched area.

The purpose of the research was therefore to generate new understanding and insight into the significance of the recent growth in and practice of chaplaincy in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church by bringing the empirical data into critical dialogue with theological and cultural perspectives and with my own perspectives as a reflexive researcher. This new knowledge could then be used as a basis for developing support and training for chaplains and for providing input to church policy regarding the same. The research needed to discover what was happening, how it was happening and why these roles were emerging.

This required 'an approach that would enable me to capture processes and relationships as well as to provide descriptions' (Cf. p.5).

In order to achieve this outcome I adopted the case study approach. I already had a research question informed by relevant theoretical perspectives. The case study approach provided the rationale for focusing the inquiry on particular contexts in order to yield the kind of rich, qualitative data that I needed as the basis for an analysis that could answer the research question. Because the research question sought to address the significance of the emergence of chaplaincy roles for the mission and ministry of the church, the research was into the practice of Christian chaplains whose roles had emerged from ministerial contexts.

Answering the research question: the fresh significance of chaplaincy in community contexts for the mission and ministry of the church

The research process as a whole identified the recent growth in chaplaincy as a distinct phenomenon that represents an entrepreneurial, missional response to the missional challenge that the changing culture presents to the church. This develops Ballard's (2009) contention that the development of chaplaincy signals the church having to adapt to the fluid and dispersed nature of contemporary life in which the geographical locatedness on which the parochial system is premised has declined in significance. Given the social reach of chaplaincy and the characteristic ability of chaplains to meet people where they are in their daily lives, chaplaincy can therefore be seen to be at the forefront of the mission of the church in the service of God's mission in the world. It expresses the relevance of the gospel in every context of life in a cultural milieu in which the majority of the population do not go to church. This constitutes the fresh significance of chaplaincy. The research evidence shows that chaplaincy is of central significance for the mission and ministry of the church. It enables the church to engage with people across diverse contexts, people whom it otherwise finds it increasingly hard to reach given that the majority of the population do not attend church or have a relationship with a religious institution.

However, the evidence also showed that the voice of chaplaincy is missing from the central missiological and ministerial discourses of the church. It is arguable that this is because, in recent years, thinking about mission has focused on the relationship with culture as a fluid category rather than as embedded in particular contexts and ministry has focused inwards as the institutional church has come under pressure. The research discovered a spectrum of confusion about what makes chaplaincy 'chaplaincy' making it difficult to represent chaplaincy in church discourses. This confusion about the nature of chaplaincy could also make it difficult for chaplains to enter into dialogue with colleagues in parish ministry and with the contexts in which they work. The research evidence thus suggests that the development of chaplaincy-type roles has outstripped theological reflection on what chaplaincy is and how it relates to the mission of the church.

The study thus discovered the need to establish parameters for chaplaincy practice if the use of the term 'chaplaincy' is to have meaningful content and not be an umbrella term for any kind of church involvement in non-church contexts. Within such parameters, chaplaincy could be described and recognised as a distinctive genre of ministry with its own theological and professional integrity and ministerial identity within the church's ecology of mission. I have argued that unless people know what is meant by chaplaincy, it cannot be coherently represented to or engage in creative dialogue with others in the service of God's mission. A practical implication of this lack of conceptual clarity about what constitutes chaplaincy, is that the institutional church remains reluctant to resource chaplaincy when it is not clear how it may contribute to what it understands as its mission in the world.

Chapter Eight therefore described an understanding of the identity and integrity of chaplaincy developed through the research process as a basis for explicating the ecclesiologies that are implicit within chaplaincy and parish ministry. The research discovered the tensions that exist between ministers who work in chaplaincy roles embedded in social structures and those who work primarily within the structures of the church. It proposes that the theological, ecclesiological and ministerial assumptions and priorities that are

in play in a given working context need to be made explicit if genuine dialogue is to take place. This could enable understanding of the relationship between the different genres of ministry to be developed and the distinctive contribution made by each to be acknowledged and valued. However, as CS3 exemplifies, even when there is a commitment to do this, it is recognised that working together presents practical and structural challenges that are not easily met.

These discoveries are discussed and interpreted in chapters Seven, Eight and Nine under the three main themes identified through the data analysis: the role of a theology of mission in the development of chaplaincy roles; the identity and integrity of chaplaincy; and the relationship between chaplaincy and parish ministry.

Taken together, the three main themes developed through the research process provide a narrative of chaplaincy that could enable it to be represented within church discourses. Chapter Two located the research within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm of qualitative research. It is within this paradigm that my construction of a narrative of chaplaincy and the narratives constructed by the participants has been placed. However, within this paradigm, I adopted a critical realist approach. This acknowledged the reality of the phenomenon of chaplaincy, a presupposition that chaplaincy could be described, as I sought to understand that reality in dialogue with my own and others' constructions and interpretations of it and with theoretical perspectives from theology and other disciplines.

The resulting narrative represents chaplaincy as a genre of ministry with its own identity and integrity which is located at the forefront of the church's vocation to serve the *missio Dei* in the world. If properly understood and resourced, it could have an important role to play within the church's ecology of mission in the service of human flourishing and the building up of the Kingdom of God. This narrative holds the potential to relate chaplaincy to the tradition and structures of the church and has theological integrity. It recognises the need for genres of ministry to be appropriately connected with church structures and authority, particularly when working with vulnerable

people, and for judgements about theology and ministry to be made. Currently there is no narrative for this kind of chaplaincy. This means that although chaplaincy in community contexts is widespread, it is not identified as making an important and distinctive contribution to the mission and ministry of the church and therefore as having a commensurate claim on resources.

The limitations of the research

Chapter Two describes in detail the strengths and limitations of case study and why I chose this approach. In summary, it enabled me to find a bounded focus for an inquiry into a diverse phenomenon. It also enabled an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of particular instances of the phenomenon in order to generate rich data that could reflect the complexity of the contexts and processes involved and which would then be available for interpretive analysis. However, given that the purpose of case study is to explore the particularity of a certain instance of something, its limitation is that the number of contexts studied is small. I am aware that the propositions developed through the data analysis will need to be tested in relation to a wider variety of contexts. This need should be met in some measure by the Church of England research that is designed to build on this study.

As qualitative research designed to allow the voices of chaplains to be heard, the study has presented diverse understandings of the lived experience of chaplaincy practice. The interpretation is therefore provisional and inevitably shaped by my own experience as a chaplain and by my choices as a researcher. Attention to reflexivity throughout the process seeks to make this dynamic as transparent as possible. I have been aware throughout the process of the potential influence in my own perception of my positive experience of being a chaplain and my lack of first-hand experience in parish ministry. As with all genres of ministry, in practice there are undoubtedly negative aspects of chaplaincy such as the tendency of some chaplains to become detached from the institutional church, referred to by the Team Rector in CS2 (Cf. p.68), with consequent difficulties in communication. The

collection of different data could lead to different conclusions and different emphases in interpretation and this may prove to be the case with the subsequent research project. However, this thesis presents a valid interpretation of the data that offers a distinctive contribution to current thinking about chaplaincy practice and policy.

The contribution to knowledge, practice and policy

The research process identified the recent growth in chaplaincy-type roles as an emerging issue that needed to be researched. It was designed to generate new insight in order to close a gap in understanding the significance of the growth of chaplaincy in community contexts. The use of the case study approach has allowed the self-reported experience of chaplains and their colleagues to be heard in the context of relevant missiological, ecclesial, ministerial and cultural understandings and has thus brought into focus the fresh contemporary significance of this genre of ministry. The approach has enabled chaplaincy to be seen in relation to the mission and ministry of the whole church acknowledging the tensions and discontinuities that exist in the relationship as well as excavating the continuities.

The three parallel case studies of the emergence of chaplaincy roles in particular ministerial contexts have enabled an in-depth exploration of particular instances of this phenomenon. This has enabled new knowledge and insight to be developed into how and why so many of these roles are emerging at this particular time. By focusing on emerging roles in community contexts, the research contributes a new perspective and new knowledge to the emerging field of chaplaincy studies which at present is weighted towards research into chaplaincy in institutional contexts. The study thus makes a contribution to knowledge in an area in which there is no previous empirical research.

As practical theology, the research has sought to explicate the missional theological rationale implicit in chaplaincy practice in order to propose a

theologically coherent rationale which can provide a foundation for the future development of support and training and for the thinking of the church.

The research also makes a contribution to knowledge in terms of the conceptualisation of chaplaincy in community contexts. By bringing chaplaincy into critical dialogue with theological perspectives, my own phronesis and understandings of the prevailing culture, particularly the turn from religion to spirituality and the subjectivisation of culture identified by Heelas and Woodhead (2005), the study has been able to propose parameters within which chaplaincy can be recognised and the theological and professional integrity and ministerial identity of the practice delineated. In this way, the research has contributed some conceptual clarity that can inform the development and support of good practice and contribute to the development of policy.

The new knowledge and insight developed through the research process has provided the basis for:

- The development of a new agenda for my own practice focused on the creation of a process consultancy model to support the sustainable development of chaplaincy roles;
- Further research commissioned by the Church of England which builds on this study and which is intended to inform policy regarding the support of chaplaincy;
- The opportunity to write a chaplaincy module as part of the curriculum for the new Common Awards for ministry.

The research has thus fulfilled its purpose, stated in the Introduction to Chapter One, of developing new insight that contributes to knowledge, practice and policy.

The study has tried, 'to capture the essence of the particular in a way we all recognize.' (Simons 2009, p.167) in the hope that it may elicit an answering recognition in practitioners and policy makers and in so doing make a difference to practice and policy within the life of the church.

Epilogue

'And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.'

(Eliot 1969b, p. 197)

In the Prologue I described my own understanding of being called to work as a chaplain and my conviction of the important contribution that chaplaincy can make to the health and wellbeing of the individuals and communities it seeks to serve and to the institutional church as it seeks to live out its vocation to serve the mission of God in the world.

As a Healthcare Chaplain, my primary horizon of understanding was the practice and culture of chaplaincy itself. Now that I am no longer a practising chaplain, through this research I have been able to explore the phenomenon of the growth of chaplaincy in community contexts from a different perspective and to locate it within the wider horizon of the mission and ministry of the whole church.

As I discuss in the study, since 1989 the cultural and social context of ministry has changed, and continues to change, rapidly. This has challenged the institutional church to think afresh about how to engage with the whole of society. In the shifting currents of a changing culture, the fresh significance of chaplaincy's potential for missional engagement with every area of life is being revealed and the church is beginning to think about the place of chaplaincy within the structures of ministry. This could therefore be a time of particular opportunity for chaplaincy and the institutional church to engage in genuine dialogue on the assumption that a mutual learning and enrichment could take place. At such a moment, if chaplaincy is to bear witness to the contribution it can make within the mission and ministry of the church, it is challenged to give an account of itself as a genre of ministry.

At present, my practice seeks to find ways to support the sustainable development of best practice in chaplaincy. This research is part of that work. It is offered as a contribution to thinking about the development of

chaplaincy and its place within the mission and ministry of the church in the service of human flourishing and the building up of the Kingdom of God.

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APPENDIX A
Chaplaincy in the Community

**The Report of a Scoping Study undertaken between September and
November 2009**

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SUMMARY

This survey was undertaken as a preliminary response to the proposed OxCEPT project for the development of training and support for individuals and organisations who are asked to provide chaplaincy in community contexts. Before such a project could be undertaken, preliminary work needed to be done in order to gain an idea of the current scope of chaplaincy provision across a variety of contexts including the structures, means of resource, training and support available to those in post.

The survey revealed that at present there is a renewed interest in chaplaincy from several church denominations possibly in the wake of the recent thinking about models of church, mission and ministry generated by Fresh Expressions. This renewed interest is also in part a response to the well documented demographic and cultural changes which have led churches to think about new ways to engage with people who no longer relate to a traditional parish model of church.

There has often been tension in the relationship between chaplaincy and the authorising body and this is now coming under some scrutiny from various denominations. Many chaplains have historically felt undervalued by their church but as the value of chaplaincy work is being recognised afresh so too is the need to do some ecclesiological and theological re-evaluation.

Chaplaincy is provided across a wide variety of contexts and using a wide variety of models. Whilst each chaplaincy context has distinctive features, the survey revealed that there are generic aspects to chaplaincy that can be described. However, the survey points to the fact that the term 'chaplaincy' itself is used as an umbrella term covering activity ranging from pastoral visiting and befriending to skilled, professional engagement with individuals and entire organisations. The lack of clear thinking about how the term is being used can translate into poor or non-existent job descriptions and a lack of appropriate training and support. Perceptions about how secular organisations view chaplaincy differ but it is clear that if chaplaincy work is to be valued and effective; chaplains need to have a clear understanding of their role, the model they are working on and how their role relates practically and theologically to the often plural and multi-faith context in which they work.

Those involved in chaplaincy are passionate about their work, even when access to appropriate resources is a constant struggle. Finding resources for training and development to support best practice is one of the major issues and one which relates to how chaplaincy is valued. The numbers of clergy and lay people involved in chaplaincy roles is significant and these people require training and support if their work is to be effective. Several organisations are now positioning themselves to provide accredited training for chaplains and this needs to be taken into account when considering how best to take forward the involvement of OxCEPT in resourcing chaplaincy.

APPENDIX B

Professional Doctorate Paper One

An exploration of the potential significance for the mission and ministry of the church in England of the recent growth in forms of chaplaincy in community contexts

APPENDIX C

Professional Doctorate Paper Two

Living Church in the World

Chaplaincy and the Mission of the Church: A case study of the development of chaplaincy in a rural context

APPENDIX D

Professional Doctorate Paper Three

Research Proposal

**Chaplaincy in Community Contexts: The significance of chaplaincy for
the mission and ministry of the church in England**

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT NAMES AND ROLES IN THE CASE STUDIES

Case Study One

Chris Agricultural Chaplain, Diocesan Rural Officer and Vicar

Case Study Two

Paul Team Rector

Kate Lead Town Centre Chaplain and Team Vicar

Jenny Community Missioner, Police Chaplain and Team Vicar

Stuart Chaplaincy to a homeless charity and Team Vicar

Kim Supermarket Chaplain and Local Ordained Minister

Peter YMCA Chaplain and Team Vicar

Case Study Three

John Vicar

Clare Older Person's Chaplain and Reader in the Church of England

Tom Methodist Minister and Supervisor of Older Person's Chaplain

Annie FE Chaplain and Curate

Mark Associate Vicar and Supervisor of FE Chaplain

APPENDIX F

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

**The Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology
and Practical Theology
Ripon College Cuddesdon
Oxford OX44 9EX**

**Anglia Ruskin University
Chelmsford Campus
Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford CM1 1SQ**

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The OxCEPT study of emerging forms of chaplaincy in community contexts

There has been a recent growth in forms of chaplaincy in community contexts but no research has been undertaken into this phenomenon. This research aims to find out: how chaplaincy emerges and is sustained, its relationship with contemporary culture and the significance of this for practice.

The research is being undertaken by OxCEPT and is funded by OxCEPT. It is also being carried out as part of a Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology at Anglia Ruskin University. The results of the research will be used in a number of ways. It is envisaged that findings may be published as articles, presented as conference papers or used to develop training material for chaplains. A book may subsequently be published.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the researcher Victoria Slater, email: victoria.slater@ripon-cuddesdon.ac.uk; telephone: 01865 877418.

Should you encounter any difficulties with the research process, please contact the researcher in the first instance so that these can be resolved. If that is not satisfactory, please email Anglia Ruskin University at: complaints@anglia.ac.uk.

You have been invited to take part in the research either because you work as a chaplain, belong to a ministry team within which chaplains work or relate to chaplaincy services within an organisation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, without explanation, simply by notifying the researcher. You are also free to refuse to participate. If you agree to take part, participation will involve being interviewed by the researcher for about 1 – 1.5 hours. This will be a semi-structured, exploratory interview which will invite you to reflect on your experience and understanding of chaplaincy. I do not foresee any health and safety risks attached to this as the interview will be conducted in your own work context in an appropriate place of your choice. Agreement to participate does not in any way compromise your legal rights in the event of unforeseen problems arising.

Interviews will be digitally recorded and the interviewer may also take notes. The information gathered (data) will be analysed in order to identify key themes and issues. All data will be stored securely. The findings will be written up as case studies which will be sent to you to check. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that all sources of data remain confidential and individuals or organisations will not be named in any research report or subsequent use of the data, it is not possible to give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality given that the descriptive nature of case studies may render the location identifiable.

I hope that your participation in the research will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your involvement with chaplaincy and that you may feel this to be of value in itself.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

**The Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology
and Practical Theology
Ripon College Cuddesdon
Oxford OX44 9EX**

**Anglia Ruskin University
Chelmsford Campus
Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford CM1 1SQ**

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of Participant:

Research Project: **Emerging forms of chaplaincy in community contexts**

Main Investigator: Victoria Slater: OxCEPT Research Officer
Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford OX44 9EX
E. victoria.slater@ripon-cuddesdon.ac.uk T. 01865 877418

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded and I give permission for the information to be used anonymously for educational purposes and in any future publications by the researcher.
4. I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and of the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to OxCEPT and Anglia Ruskin University* processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of Participant (print)..... Signed.....
Date.....

Name of Witness (print)..... Signed.....
Date.....

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return it to the main investigator named above.

.....

The OxCEPT study of emerging forms of chaplaincy in community contexts

I wish to withdraw from this study.

Name (print)..... Signed.....

Date.....

* 'The University' includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TEAM/GROUP LEADERS

Emerging forms of chaplaincy in community contexts

Research Question: What is the significance for the mission and ministry of the church in England of the recent growth in forms of chaplaincy in community contexts?

Context

- Please describe to me the context of your work. How do you see chaplaincy as part of that context?
- What part, if any, do the chaplaincy posts play in the overall strategy of the team?
- How did the chaplaincy roles develop or emerge as part of the ministry of the team?

The distinctiveness of chaplaincy

- What, to you, is distinctive about chaplaincy? What characterises chaplaincy?
- What does a chaplaincy role enable someone to do or to be that is different to parish ministry?
- How is chaplaincy different to parish ministry?
- What do you think is important about chaplaincy as a form of ministry?

Chaplaincy and parish ministry

- How do chaplains relate to the team as a whole?
- How do you understand chaplaincy in relation to parish ministry?
- What challenges, if any, does chaplaincy present to the team?
- What opportunities, if any, does chaplaincy present to the team?
- What, if anything, does the presence of a chaplaincy component within the team enable the team to do or to be that would otherwise not be possible?
- What, if anything, does chaplaincy contribute to the team and vice versa?
- Do you understand chaplaincy work in relation to the mission of the church? If so, in what way?

Anything else?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CHAPLAINS AND TEAM MEMBERS

Emerging forms of chaplaincy in community contexts

Research Question: What is the significance for the mission and ministry of the church in England of the recent growth in forms of chaplaincy in community contexts?

Context

- Please describe to me the context of your work. How is your chaplaincy role part of that context?
- Has there always been a chaplaincy role here or is that something that has emerged or been developed by you?
- Tell me how the chaplaincy role has emerged or been developed.

Content

- How is the chaplaincy role set up? Are there any formal or informal agreements? Is it voluntary or paid?
- What are the main components of your role as a chaplain?
- What is most important to you about chaplaincy?
- What are the challenges that chaplaincy presents?
- Tell me about how you do/practice chaplaincy: What is your approach?
- In what ways does the context of the work influence how you practice?
- Have you had any training for or opportunity to reflect upon your work as a chaplain?
- What resources are required to sustain and develop the work? Do you feel that the resources you need are available?

Chaplaincy and parish ministry

- What led you to take on/develop the chaplaincy role?
- How do you understand what you are doing? What theological thinking underpins your chaplaincy work?
- What do you see as the purpose or aim of your chaplaincy work?
- In what ways, if any, does your chaplaincy work relate to the work of the parish?
- Do you understand your chaplaincy work in relation to the mission of the church? If so, how?

The distinctiveness of chaplaincy

- For you, what (if anything) is distinctive about being a chaplain?
- What/does chaplaincy enable you to do or be that is different to parish ministry?
- What do you think is important about chaplaincy as a form of ministry?

Anything else?

APPENDIX H

A POSSIBLE STRUCTURE FOR A DEVELOPMENTAL CONSULTANCY MODEL FOR CHAPLAINCY

1. *Context and preliminary questions*

What is going on here? What is the social, cultural and ecclesial context?

What has led you to consider developing chaplaincy?

How are you listening to:

- What the situation is saying?
- What the people that you meet are saying?
- What God might be saying?
- Yourself as individuals and as a community?

What kind of theological understanding of the work do you have? How does it relate to the discernment of God's mission in the world?

2. *'Audit' of current situation*

What are the opportunities for involvement in community contexts?

What existing connections/relationships do people have?

What is already happening?

3. *Describing the model of chaplaincy being/to be used*

What is 'chaplaincy'?

What does/will chaplaincy look like in your context?

4. *Articulating a vision for the work*

What is your vision for the work?

How can you make that vision explicit?

How do you hold the vision? Provisionally? Possessively? Are you open to it being changed as you engage in dialogue with others?

5. *Listening to those you seek to serve*

Are the voices of those you seek to serve being heard?

What structures and processes do you need to put in place so that they can be heard?

Are you willing to enter into genuine dialogue with others recognising that you have things to learn from each other and that you need to be prepared to be changed by the encounters?

6. *Articulation and Evaluation of current practice*

If you are already involved, describe your current practice?

How does this relate to your understanding of chaplaincy?

How does this relate to what you learn in dialogue with others?

What would best practice look like?

What do you need in order to offer and sustain best practice?

7. *Identification of resources required to provide a chaplaincy service*

Are there appropriate structures, procedures, training and resources to sustain the work? If not, what steps can you take to improve this situation?

What personnel resources are required?

What training and support resources are required?

What physical, spiritual and emotional resources are required?

8. *Identification of available resources*

9. *The relationship of chaplaincy with the wider ministerial context*

What does chaplaincy bring to the working context and vice versa?

Encouraging or training those involved to reflect theologically on practice in order to develop an understanding of chaplaincy as integral to but distinct within the church's ecology of mission.

How can you develop pathways of mutual enrichment, insight and growth?

10. *Identifying appropriate structures for selection, co-ordination, support and training*

11. *Developing structures to maintain the work and mutual enrichment*

What kind of governance is appropriate?

Are mediating structures required?

What are the lines of management and accountability?

How is chaplaincy reviewed?

How do chaplains and the institution/those in parish based ministry engage in dialogue or conversation?