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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the assessment of innovative practices in police chaplaincy. The purpose of the project intervention is to develop protocols that can guide police chaplains through an assessment process. The intervention relies on practical theology as exemplified through the ministry of chaplaincy. This ministry comprises police chaplains offering spiritual comfort to persons encountering critical incidents involving violence, accident, or other trauma-intensive events and situations. Adoption of innovations can allow police chaplains to be more effective in fulfilling many outward-focused tasks such as delivery of death notifications. I conclude that: (1) police chaplaincy is amenable to use of protocols to assess innovative practices, (2) practices in police chaplaincy that relate to time and other resource constraints are especially in need of innovations, (3) diversity of chaplaincy practices is increasingly important, (4) innovations that address moral injury and moral distress in chaplains and those they serve are needed, and (5) this protocol has applicability beyond this police chaplaincy program.

Protocols for Enhancing the Role and Value of Spiritual Care Resources in the
Metropolitan Nashville Police Department

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology
Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

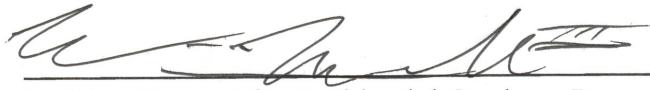
By

Garrett Harper

May 2024

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Garrett Harper, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry



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Dedicated to chaplains as they serve in many and varied settings and as they fulfill a calling to meet people where they are and together to share God's presence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to the professors at Abilene Christian University Graduate School of Theology for their mentorship and instruction. I am especially grateful to my advisor Dr. Carson Reed for his wise and caring encouragement and support throughout my studies and my project. I also deeply appreciate Dr. Eric Skidmore as an advisor whose experience and insight into chaplaincy enriched my understanding of that field. Thank you as well to Dr. Tera Harmon for thoughtful service on my committee.

I am thankful for those experts in chaplaincy and pastoral roles for their willingness to remain ongoing conversation partners and scholars for whom academic curiosity and achievement blend readily with spiritual care. Thank you to Dr. Sheri Bartlett Brown, Dr. Will Whitmore, and Dr. Laws Rushing II for your generosity and support.

I want to express my gratitude to the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department chaplaincy program for their support and gracious assistance with this project. Chaplain coordinator Sgt. Andrew Ivey was ever generous, enthusiastic, and helpful in all aspects of this work.

I am thankful for colleagues and friends in my ministry context through Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County. Abdelghani Barre, my colleague and friend, provided consistent encouragement for my studies in countless

ways. Renee Pratt provided me with the opportunity to be creative and innovative with this project.

I am thankful for my fellow students in the Doctor of Ministry program. Sharing classes and time together was a joyful experience that made the journey greatly fulfilling. Likewise, my fellow students in Clinical Pastoral Education have been a rich blessing to me.

I want to express my great thanks to my friend, Dr. Robyn Mace. She has been an anchor of gracious assistance at each step of my intervention project. Her wisdom, mentorship, inspiration, and generosity of ideas and insights helped to make any and every challenge seem manageable. It was indeed a blessing to have Robyn's assistance and friendship accompany me on the journey.

Lastly, I want to honor a "cloud of witnesses" of family past and present that I sense have influenced me and walked alongside me in my studies and in this project. Above all, I am grateful beyond words to my mother, whose life has been one of love and support for me, my family, and our faith communities. Her own chaplaincy work inspires me, and her life and love are central to what replenishes my soul and will carry on with me in the journey ahead.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	LIST OF FIGURES	iv
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Project Title.....	2
	Purpose of the Project	2
	Ministry Context	2
	Historical Context	9
	Constraints of Chaplaincy	10
	Statement of the Problem.....	11
	Basic Assumptions.....	11
	Definitions.....	12
	Delimitations of the Project	13
	Limitations of the Project.....	13
	Conclusion	14
II.	THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
	A Theology of Chaplaincy	16
	Sharing Sacred Space.....	19
	Spiritual Healing and Self Care	23
	Theoretical Frameworks	25
	Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model of Human Wellbeing.....	25
	Rationale for Police Chaplaincy	35

III.	METHODOLOGY	36
	Qualitative Research	36
	Project Intervention.....	37
	Description of the Participants.....	38
	Description of the Project Sessions.....	39
	Guided Discussion Framework.....	40
	Drafting of the Protocols.....	40
	Participation Discussion Session Descriptions	41
	Session 1: May 10, 2023	41
	Session 2: August 30, 2023.....	44
	Session 3: September 20, 2023	50
	Session 4: October 11, 2023	52
	Evaluation	55
	Data Collection	56
	Insider Angle.....	57
	Outsider Angle	58
	Researcher Angle	62
	Data Analysis	63
	Prepare the Data.....	63
	Develop Categories and a Coding Scheme	64
	Coding Methods.....	65
	Analyze Results and Draw Conclusions: Triangulation ...	66

IV.	FINDINGS AND RESULTS	68
	Evaluation of Findings	68
	Description of Results	69
	Chaplaincy as Ministry of Presence	69
	Situations of Distress	69
	Theological and Practical Aspects	70
	Slippages	70
	Silences	70
	Revisiting the Assumptions	71
	Interpretation	72
	Moral Distress and Moral Injury	73
	Confronting the Unknown	76
	Spirituality in Critical Incidents	77
	Summary of Findings	79
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	80
	Interpretation: Bridging Sacred and Secular Space	80
	Trustworthiness	80
	Applicability	81
	Dependability	82
	Credibility	82
	Reflexivity	82
	Significance and Implications	84
	Sustainability	85

Personal Significance.....	86
Theological Significance	87
Opportunity for Further Research	88
Conclusion	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	91
APPENDIX A: Ethics Approval: IRB Exemption Letter.....	98
APPENDIX B: Solicitation Letter	99
APPENDIX C: Consent Form	100
APPENDIX D: Team Discussion Session Questions.....	102
APPENDIX E: Outside Expert Questions	104
APPENDIX F: Field Note Protocols	105
APPENDIX G: ARTIFACT: Protocols for Assessing Innovative Practices.....	106
APPENDIX H: Instruments	108

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Perceived Relevance of Practice and Theological Aspects	46
2. Rating Protocol for Hypothetical Practices.....	47
3. Examples of Enhancements and Innovations in Practice	58
4. Relationship between PTSD and Moral Injury	75

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The role of police chaplaincy is infrequently encountered by much of the public at large, yet when individuals experience loss due to violence, accident, or other critical incidents, they likely are served by staff or volunteer chaplains from a public safety agency. Police chaplains serve in a unique ministry of presence for those experiencing loss, trauma, and pain resulting from critical incidents. Police chaplains provide spiritual care in complex and trying environments filled with challenges to effectively address the volume, intensity, and diversity of public need.

This project involves a ministry intervention aimed at enhancing the role and value of the spiritual care resources used by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd) in Nashville, Tennessee. The intervention used a multi-methods approach to develop ways to assess practices and innovations in providing spiritual care to persons impacted by violence, accident, or other traumatic incidents. This intervention was developed to create a consistent process design for chaplaincy and spiritual care practices that are theologically grounded and aligned with clear practical needs. A group of staff and volunteer chaplains in the department participated in guided discussion processes intended to shape protocols for assessing enhanced chaplaincy program practices.

Project Title

The title of the project is “Protocols for Enhancing the Role and Value of Spiritual Care Resources in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department.” The title describes both the topic and the location of the project. The objective of the project is to develop protocols designed to enhance the services and resources associated with the chaplaincy program in the department that are used to address the critical spiritual and emotional needs of persons in Davidson County experiencing various types of personal loss following situations where the department has been involved. The protocols serve as the project artifact developed through guided discussion sessions with staff and volunteer chaplains, grounded in review of research literature on emerging trends in chaplaincy, and shaped through review and discernment by expert informants in chaplaincy research and practice.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop protocols that guide assessment of practices that can serve as enhancements to more fully serve spiritual care provided by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd) to persons impacted by personal loss through violence, accident, or other critical incidents where MNPd has a public safety role. The resulting protocol framework offers opportunities for enhancing theologically grounded spiritual care practices used by the MNPd.

Ministry Context

I will provide a brief overview of the unique ministry context of police chaplaincy as it functions in a large, urbanized county. The presenting problem is identified through contemporary literature on the field of chaplaincy, synthesis of discussion with

professional chaplains in diverse chaplaincy settings, reflexive case studies in clinical pastoral education and interactions with leaders of relevant Nashville municipal service organizations.

The Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Police Department serves a large urban center in the mid-south. Nashville is a city that continues to experience rapid, dynamic growth and change. Over decades, Nashville experienced major transformations—economically, culturally, and physically. Many “big city” issues now dominate life in Nashville: traffic congestion, increased amount of crime, and escalation in cost of living. While an attractive and popular city for young, relocating workers from around the country, Nashville remains a place of considerable poverty, challenge, and struggle for many. Economic and social challenges created difficulties for first responders, healthcare workers, public school teachers, and other groups to live and work in a city that experiences high levels of unaffordability, intense levels of traffic congestion, large numbers of visitors, and resulting heightened levels of crime, violence, and accidents. Currently, many Nashville workers live outside of Davidson County with more continuing to relocate due to high cost of housing.¹ Gentrification is occurring at a rapid pace throughout the city, creating high-price housing that is edging out long-time working and middle-class households.² The average home price in the Nashville area

1. Jackie DelPilar, “Thousands More People Are Moving Out of Nashville Than Moving In, Report Shows,” WZTV17, May 3, 2022. <https://fox17.com/news/local/thousands-more-people-are-moving-out-of-nashville-than-moving-in-report-shows>; Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, “Understanding Nashville’s Housing Crisis”, January 2018. <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/human-relations/publications>

2. Destiny Birdsong, “Nashville’s Gentrification Is Driving Away Young Black Residents Like Me,” *Nashville Scene*, October 27, 2021. https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/citylimits/nashville-s-gentrification-is-driving-away-young-black-residents-like-me/article_e26dfac4-3699-11ec-a494-e364c7a8ee25.html#:~:text=This%20city%20is%20systematically%20eliminating,of%20the%20day's%20bingo%20card.; Linda Ong, “Gentrification Is Having Mixed Impacts in East Nashville Neighborhoods,”

reached \$490,000 in July 2021, up from \$343,000 just two years earlier.³ These types of conditions collectively impact the ability of many working and middle class households to cope with financial requirements to both live and work in Nashville.

Demographic and economic patterns in Nashville suggest a “tale of two cities.” Poverty remains a way of life for many Nashvillians, lack of a living wage is widespread in many occupations, and educational attainment and outcomes remain abysmally low for many residents. Nashville has one of the nation’s largest poverty populations for young people and rates of poverty among African American population far higher than comparable cities. The poverty rate for single mothers with children in Davidson County averages 38.2 percent.⁴ Data indicate that about one half of Nashville’s population experiences de facto “Living Wage Poverty.”⁵ The prevalence of poverty exacerbates many other conditions such that incidents of crime and violence are commonplace.

The Nashville police department, its personnel, and its duties share many of the challenges experienced by peer organizations around the nation. Trauma and disruptions caused by prolonged policy debates about police roles and actions, often difficult or untenable community conditions for maintaining order and safety, and overall decline in public support for police contribute to a sense of helplessness among many public safety officers. COVID-19 and incidents of violence often far from Nashville intensified already

WKRN, January 18, 2019. <https://www.wkrn.com/news/gentrification-is-having-mixed-impact-in-east-nashville-neighborhoods/>.

3. Greater Nashville Realtors, “Market and Data News,” accessed 14 November 2023, <https://www.greaternashvillerealtors.org/market-data-monthly/>.

4. United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021, 1-year estimate, Table DP03, Davidson County, TN.

5. Metropolitan Social Services, Community Needs Evaluation, 2021, 14.

difficult community environments and the work lives and personal lives of local police. Widespread reporting on early retirements and resignations from the police profession highlight the hardships that officers face.⁶ Nashville police shortages, in turn, lead to further stress on those remaining to carry out the department responsibilities.⁷

The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd) serves Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, the twenty-third largest city in the nation. The department has a total staff of about two thousand employees, including 1,443 sworn officers. The system acquired its present form in 1963 upon the consolidation of the City of Nashville and Davidson County into a unified, metropolitan form of government. The former policing duties of the county sheriff's office were delegated to MNPd with the Sheriff's office retaining responsibility for serving summons, operating the city jail, and selected other responsibilities.

The immediate context of the project involves the MNPd chaplaincy program. While informal chaplaincy services have existed since MNPd's inception in 1963 under Metropolitan government, the formal volunteer chaplaincy program began in 2005. Currently, there are two full-time chaplains and one part-time chaplain that are employed by MNPd. The two full-time chaplains are sworn officers in the department. Currently, there are thirty-three volunteer chaplains with six new chaplains recently added in June 2023. The program has maintained an average of twenty-five volunteer chaplains in recent years. These volunteers commit to twenty-four hours a month of service for

6. Ben Hall, "Metro Police Officers Leaving the Department Due to Low Morale," *News Channel 5: Nashville*, February 19, 2019. <https://www.newschannel5.com/news/newschannel-5-investigates/metro-police-officers-leaving-the-department-due-to-low-morale>.

7. Tosin Fakile, "Metro Police Short 180 Officers: Impact on Response Times," *WSMV4*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.wsmv.com/2022/02/05/metro-police-short-180-officers-impact-response-times/>.

designated shifts which they select. By far, the greatest responsibility for the volunteers is to provide death notifications to persons that die in Davidson County as a result of violent or traumatic incidents, which can include homicide, suicide, and accidental death. In the calendar year 2023 through November, the staff and volunteer chaplains completed over eight hundred death notifications. Additionally, some chaplains offer follow up calls to families that are impacted by these events, potentially adding to the number of encounters associated with a given case.

Chaplains in the MNPDP program are required to complete a process that involves a criminal background check, an interview, verification of religious endorsement, and training in the classroom and in the field. The profile of volunteer chaplains is somewhat varied. The majority are male and African American, with nearly all volunteers from a Protestant Christian background. Many are current or retired pastors or other religious workers. The average age of the group is between fifty and sixty-five. Some have had experience working in police or other first responder or security roles. Numerous chaplains have served in the volunteer chaplain role for many years. There are limited languages other than English spoken among the chaplains. Currently there is some capacity for Spanish and Arabic among the group, with reliance on translator banks from other sources to serve as needed for other languages. The program maintains contact with spiritual care workers from other faith communities that are contacted when a death notification or other service need indicates that involvement by another faith tradition is desired or helpful.

My role in the project is as a Nashville municipal employee for several years and as a researcher in the public sector on Nashville social, demographic, and economic

topics. My background and interests in research on community and organizational wellbeing and in chaplaincy heighten my interest in ways that spiritual care services can be used more effectively to address personal stress and trauma that characterizes much of the context of persons in the public that are served by police chaplaincy related to critical incidents. Support for the spiritual care resources offered through MNPd for its external population provides an opportunity to develop innovative approaches to complement existing activities and practices. The environment facing officers in MNPd overall is one of substantial physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual difficulty. The officer chaplains bear a dual responsibility of providing spiritual care to other officers as well as providing service to the community and coordinating the large volunteer chaplain program. Volunteer chaplains work exclusively with the outward facing community. Early conversations with department leaders, chaplains, and social workers in MNPd, chaplains in various local and non-local settings, and researchers in pastoral care studies furthered my interest in this project topic.

The challenges that face the officer chaplains are a reflection of the situations that police staff encounter. Issues of low pay are endemically associated with police roles in the United States with salaries of police officers rising only modestly in recent years. Nationally, police hirings decreased and resignations and retirements increased in 2020 and 2021 over previous years, due to a variety of factors, including the stresses of the COVID pandemic, salary issues, and widespread tensions associated with public protests and demonstrations.⁸ The annual salary for an officer in MNPd following the six-month

8. Police Executive Research Forum, "PERF Survey Shows Steady Staff Decrease over the Past Two Years," March 2022, <https://www.policeforum.org/workforcemarch2022>.

training period is \$59,260. Meanwhile, by way of comparison, the MIT Living Wage Calculator for Davidson County in 2022 indicates that approximately \$73,413 is needed for a family with two adults, one working, and two children.⁹

The economic hardship facing Nashville police simply exacerbates the other burdens that can often accompany this occupation. Many stresses are those shared with workers in other trauma-intensive environments, while police experience several issues that are unique to their profession. The routine nature of interacting with violence, disaster, crime, death of incident victims and colleagues results in a complex situation where moral injury, experience of loss, and compassion fatigue become highly common.¹⁰ Burnout of police officers can arise from both organizational and social stressors that are intensified in the police setting, including focus on rank and promotion, gender and race issues, and, more recently, public policy debates on the role of police in society.¹¹ Moral injury is another phenomenon which is manifested among police officers and chaplains where those individuals are routinely called on to perform tasks and make decisions where they “respond first to a critical incident scene and support those severely wounded or traumatized by a perpetrator or catastrophic event.”¹² The extreme dangers and difficulties in fulfilling all aspects of policing are confronted by moral, ethical, and

9. Living Wage Calculator, “Living Wage Calculations for Davidson County, Tennessee,” May 2022, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/47037>.

10. Konstantinos Papazoglou and Brooke McQuerrey Tuttle, “Fighting Police Trauma: Practical Approaches to Addressing Psychological Needs of Officers,” *Journal of Police Emergency Response* (July-September 2018):1–2.

11. Chris Alexander, “Police Psychological Burnout and Trauma.” *Police Trauma: Psychological Aftermath of Civilian Combat* (1999): 54–64.

12. Konstantinos Papazoglou et al., “Moral Injury in Police Work,” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, September 2019, <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/moral-injury-in-police-work>.

spiritual anxieties. Often, police officers and chaplains are witness to situations where their locus of control falls short of a moral imperative to act. While the emphasis in this project is on the chaplaincy services delivered to community residents experiencing tragedy, in many respects the chaplain roles are inherently tied to the work of public safety and policing itself.

Historical Context

Police chaplaincy is by no means a new area of service to the community. Yet, the standardization of the field only began to gain momentum in the 1970s. The International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) was formed in 1973 to further this standardization.¹³ The chaplain coordinator at MNPd is certified through the ICPC, although this certification is not a stated requirement for the role. The impetus for greater standardization of police chaplaincy derived from a sensed need to address the stress impacts experienced by police officers. Over time, this aspect of the work has continued along with other services features extending to support for communities and those impacted by violence, accident, and trauma. Currently, unlike some other areas of chaplaincy such as the military, many healthcare settings, or federal prisons, there are no national or local standards that are uniformly applied to the organization or practice of police chaplaincy. A specific public safety chaplaincy focus is rare in seminary training, in clinical pastoral education, or in funded chaplaincy roles within public safety agencies as part of wellness programs. The ICPC recommends that chaplains, both staff and

13. Ronit J. Stahl, "Chaplaincy in the United States: A Short History," in *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, eds. Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 29.

volunteers, receive a background check, have a religious endorsement, and have at least five years of relevant experience.¹⁴

The distinction between staff and volunteer chaplains in MNPd and policing overall is that those which are sworn officers of the police force typically have oversight responsibilities for the chaplaincy activities of the force, serving both staff and officer needs and those of the external community. The officers often may be more likely to be those responsible for the spiritual care needs of other officers and staff on the force. In many instances, volunteer commitments to serve as chaplains can be rather loose and fluid, even operating on an as needed basis. The continuity of chaplaincy programs typically hinges on a combination of the level of executive and administrative support from the department and the degree to which chaplaincy programming is well organized and managed by one or more persons with experience in chaplaincy services. While the necessity of meeting demands for delivering large volume of death notifications may be a reason for a large volunteer chaplain corps, a heartfelt commitment by police leadership that chaplains provide a unique and important presence in many ways in the police environment is equally important.

Constraints of Chaplaincy

The nature of police chaplaincy inherently involves situations and events where police are or have been present. Critical incidents of violence or accident are the environments where police presence is expected. Subsequently, these settings often require police chaplaincy to provide information or other assistance to persons immediately impacted by the events. In large cities such as Nashville, the volume of these

14. Stahl, "Chaplaincy," 51.

events is expectedly high. Therefore, the largest single commitment of time among MNPD staff and volunteer chaplains is typically allotted to delivering death notifications to family of those that have died through violence or accident. The unpredictability of the time, intensity, frequency, and location of these events creates a great challenge for police chaplaincy in many respects. The provision of logistics, scheduling, and resourcing for chaplaincy deployment can be complex and the physical and emotional toll on chaplains can be severe.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that this project addresses is the lack of a protocol to assess innovative practices in chaplaincy and spiritual care services provided by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. The development and use of protocols will provide a more useful means of understanding and assessing potential enhancements to services that address issues of personal and community distress, crisis, and trauma. Staff and volunteer chaplains, along with those that they serve, could potentially benefit from practices that enhance the ability to meet the needs of persons experiencing those events and conditions.

Basic Assumptions

This project assumes that the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department staff and volunteer chaplains engage with matters of distress, crisis, and trauma that occur in the community through a variety of practices. The project also assumes that these conditions which are currently addressed in non-clinical ways through access to chaplaincy and spiritual care resources can be further enhanced through innovations and new, altered, or expanded practices. This thesis assumes that moral injury and moral distress are relevant

issues affecting both police chaplains and those that they serve. Lastly, this project assumes that protocols for assessing the merits of potential innovative practices can provide an important and necessary framework for enhancing the role and value of chaplaincy activity in this ministry context.

Definitions

The following definitions derive from various disciplines important to the field of chaplaincy. Theology, psychology, and the academic study of chaplaincy itself provide useful definitions that are considered as normative for this thesis.

Chaplaincy is term that has varied definitions, not all of which correspond to contemporary meanings of that field. A standard definition is “a clergyman in charge of a chapel; a clergyman officially attached to a branch of the military, to an institution, or to a family or court; a person chosen to conduct religious exercises (as at a meeting of a club or society); a clergyman appointed to assist a bishop (as at a liturgical function).”¹⁵

Trauma is defined as “a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.”¹⁶ It arises from an event or incident of varying length and intensity and provokes a reaction that is jarring to one’s physical, mental, or emotional state of equilibrium.

Moral injury is defined as “the damage done to one’s conscience or moral compass when that person perpetrates, witnesses, or fails to prevent acts that transgress one’s own moral beliefs, values, or ethical codes of conduct.”¹⁷

15. *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “chaplaincy (n),” accessed 18 October 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chaplain>.

16. *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “trauma (n),” accessed 18 October 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma>.

17. Moral Injury Project, “What is Moral Injury?,” Syracuse University, accessed 21 October 2023, <https://moralinjuryproject.syr.edu/about-moral-injury/>.

Spirituality has many definitions and meanings, one of which refers to “a personal or group search for the sacred in life.”¹⁸ Religion, in a comparative sense, refers to “a search for the sacred within a traditional context such as a formal religious institution.”¹⁹ Chaplaincy is often referred to as spiritual care in contemporary literature where the focus is on the role of the chaplain to engage with persons holistically.

Delimitations of the Project

Police chaplaincy is a term that may not be widely understood outside of the confines of those that serve in that capacity. The vast number and variety of public safety organizations suggests that there is no singular model of chaplaincy in that space. This project is delimited to participating professional staff and volunteers in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department chaplaincy program and to those elements of the community served by those persons upon loss due to accident, violence, or other exceptional events. This study focuses on the spiritual care activities of the chaplains themselves and does not directly engage those populations served by these activities. Although the project intervention addresses practices used by the police department, it is possible that resulting protocols could inform other public safety and public sectors settings and activities.

Limitations of the Project

A limitation of the project relates to the intervention team’s prior knowledge of, experience with, or receptiveness to specific enhancements or innovations in spiritual

18. Linda K. George, David B. Larson, Harold G. Koenig, and Michael E. McCullough, “Spirituality and Health: What We Know, What We Need to Know,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 19: 103.

19. George et al., “Spirituality,” 103.

care and chaplaincy practices. A second limitation of the project is that the resulting protocols themselves will not alone have the capability of enhancing spiritual care practices, but rather the appropriate implementation and reception of protocols by their agents and audiences can provide future opportunities for enhancing those practices. A final overall limitation of the project regards the caution against overgeneralization of the data collected or the resulting findings.²⁰

The intent of the development of a protocol for assessing spiritual care practices in police chaplaincy is to provide a viable means and method for accomplishing that task in a theologically and pragmatically sound manner. Analysis of the utility and efficacy of potential practices in use by police chaplaincy, both as regard chaplains and those served, is beyond the scope of this project, though worthy of continued study.

Conclusion

In this chapter, chaplaincy programming with the MNPD was introduced as the context for this project and thesis. The problem identification arose from discussion within the chaplaincy program itself as well as contemporary literature on police chaplaincy and chaplaincy overall. The project intervention intended to result in developing a protocol for assessing innovative practices in the MNPD program that was theologically grounded and responsive to the practical challenges and constraints of police chaplaincy.

20. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 84.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project is built on several contextualized theological and theoretical foundations for the project intervention. The theological construct relies on the acknowledgement that humans are spiritual beings created in the image of God and whose spirituality represents a vital aspect of their overall physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. Further, this project recognizes the importance of spirituality that is inherent to all persons regardless of the ways that those may be manifested in formal, traditional, or visible ways. The nature of police chaplaincy requires that a theological framework remain open enough to embrace persons served that are situated in a very wide array of faith traditions or in no faith tradition. Each of these theological premises is considered in the context of persons serving in and experiencing traumatic and distressing situations.

The theoretical foundation of the project rests with understanding of the interrelatedness of individual spirituality and “whole person” social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing with ability to flourish amid varying events and circumstances. The biopsychosocial-spiritual model points to a linkage between spirituality and spiritual practices with an individual sense of wellbeing and reduced levels of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, suicide, and other maladaptive activities.¹ Secular organizations, such as

1. Harold G. Koenig, Michael E. McCullough, and David B. Larson, *Handbook of Religion and Health* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 223; Harold Koenig, “Religion and Medicine III: Developing a Theoretical Model,” *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine* 31, no. 2 (2004):206-

public safety agencies, often are responsible for providing assistance to those in need with a recognition that spiritual care is a critical resource to address the special needs of those experiencing and delivering care in traumatic situations.

A Theology of Chaplaincy

The primary theological focus of this project involves the service of volunteer police chaplains to those experiencing trauma or distress related to accidents, dangerous incidents, and experiences. Chaplaincy is a field with origins in antiquity where chaplains accompanied armies into difficult settings to ensure that an individual identified with spiritual and religious matters was on hand for ritual and counsel to those facing danger and death.² While chaplaincy has broadened into many other fields in modern times, the same sense of spiritual agents' availability to others facing difficulty remains.

While many police departments have formal or informal chaplaincy units, larger departments tend to have larger and more established and organized chaplain corps. The MNPd, serving a large city population, has a formal chaplaincy program that comprises sworn officers as chaplains as well as many volunteer chaplains. While chaplains serve in many settings, those in military, public safety, and first responder environments share a common feature of confrontation with frequent trauma, violence, and their aftermath that can differ in some ways from chaplaincy found in areas such as healthcare services, hospice, prisons, workplace, and others. A common feature of many chaplaincy settings is a separation from usual or immediate access to an individual's anchor of faith or religious

208.

2. Pauletta Otis, "An Overview of the U. S. Military Chaplaincy: A Ministry of Presence and Practice," *Review of Faith & International Affairs* 7 no. 4 (2009): 4.

communities or a lack of ties to any community in instances where spiritual care may be sought.

The practice of chaplaincy is often described as a “ministry of presence.” This implies that persons enduring hardship can benefit from having someone that is trained and capable in exercising nonjudgmental spiritual care to be present to walk alongside those that suffer. These chaplains instead meet persons in their moments of distress with the comfort of being with them to listen, to empathize, and to allow their presence to validate that their pain is real and acknowledged. In a very real sense, chaplains bring themselves into a space as ministers where they believe God is ever and already present. In many respects, chaplaincy and perhaps uniquely police chaplaincy offer clear example of practical theology where dogmatic and doctrinal dimensions can be rather inconsequential to those suffering distress. The immediate goal is to offer a practical theology that conveys God and His love and care with those that suffer.

The chaplain, however, is much more than simply an individual who guides people or remains with people through their pain and trauma. Eugene Peterson calls *grief management* “one of the most offensive phrases to appear in recent literature of pastoral care.”³ Instead, being present with those that suffer in many ways gives meaning to a never-ending presence of God with those that suffer. God is present in all times, in all places, and with all persons, most deeply at their points of pain and suffering.

Suffering can lead to the inevitable hard questions involving, “why has God let this happen to me?” and, “how can a just God let injustices and suffering by the innocent occur?” While the issues of theodicy extend into and beyond many pastoral encounters,

3. Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 112.

they also often reside at their heart. Anger at God and sensing an absent God are not new to the human condition. Yet, pastoral care can draw from the historical record of God and His people in such situations. The book of Lamentations offers powerful example to occasions where suffering contends with theodicy's challenge. Lamentations and lament directly confront suffering and its manifestations.⁴ The ability to express anger corresponds with lament that “doesn’t do anything about suffering” and does not give answers or provide remedies.⁵ Likewise, at points of suffering, God can send God’s angels as servants, as “spirits to care for people” (Heb 1:14). As temptation to doubt God’s presence and purposes arise, God provides the “strong wall of angelic defense” against the devil.⁶

God’s presence is conveyed and projects by the quiet presence of those ministering to those that suffer. Psalm 22:1–2 conveys the sense of suffering which many chaplains may hear as, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest.” Chaplains represent a unique ministry of presence that steps in where other ministerial roles may lack experience with addressing tragedy and loss. Perhaps congregations and their ministers are often ill-equipped to intervene.⁷ Though churches may do many things well in meeting spiritual and basic human needs, their experience is most often located in ceremony, ritual, and prayer, as well as gathering

4. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones*, 113.

5. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones*, 113.

6. Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations* (Just and Sinner Publishing, 2020), 112.

7. Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair, *I Wasn’t Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping, and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One* (Chicago: Sourcebooks, 2008), 213.

food and clothing for the needy. When tragedy and loss occur, churches may rally to prayer for those involved yet in those contexts members may have “lost the basic vocabulary to communicate with God.”⁸

Sharing Sacred Space

The typical setting for persons who are caught up in traumatic situations of loss is one far removed from the quiet space of worship, contemplation, or rest. Even so, the events that take place often have profound meaning for those experiencing losses. The loss of a loved one can be among the most trying events in one’s life. In those situations, a chaplain serves to help the sufferer in perceiving or acknowledging the sacredness that is embodied in the loss wherever and however it occurs. Chaplains will possess special skills and intuition to convey the sacred in times of deep pain and loss and to convey a spiritual importance that can express what a sufferer may be unable to articulate. In some ways the chaplain seeks to communicate the exceptional importance of a situation which to others not involved may seem merely ordinary, routine, or simply tragic.

Life and death are both sacred in the life of faith. Jesus regarded Lazarus as his friend in life and the one over whom he wept in death (John 11:35). Further, Jesus himself incarnationally became the very sanctity of the Godhead in both life and death. The fleetingness of life often remains out of mind in contemporary society yet becomes central when violence and accident claim lives. Abrupt change from life to death is usually jarring and traumatic for those that remain among family and friends. Frequently, the immediacy compacts many emotions and questions. The “why” is often the stunned reaction that may lead to further and future grieving. The immediate loss is embodied in the time, place, and

8. Noel and Blair, *I Wasn't Ready*, 213.

setting where loss occurs. This tangible loss often leads to a commemoration of the site of death, just as an undefined or unlocated remains leads to added anxiety and inability to experience closure in ways that typically allow for the sacred to be acknowledged through ritual and remembrance.

Ministry in many settings is focused inwardly to a faith community. Yet, the Bible provides examples of ministry that looks outward to society. In the Old Testament, priests accompanied armies into battle (Deut 20:2–4). Jesus’s ministry often took him not to the Temple in Jerusalem, but away from it. In encountering the Samaritan woman (John 4:1–8), Jesus seeks the outsider in alien territory and engages her in compassionate, deep dialogue.⁹ The apostle Paul, venturing into the midst of Athens’ great thinkers, seeks an opportunity to share respectful attention on matters of faith. The need for a pastoral presence for persons in secular settings that are nevertheless persons with spiritual lives appears manifest. Above all, as now fewer people may find support for those lives in traditional organized religion, chaplaincy offers a resource when critical needs arise. Approximately a third of people under age thirty are not affiliated with a local religious organization and can benefit from settings where “chaplains are positioned to meet them where they are, as they are.”¹⁰

9. Alan T. Baker, *Foundations of Chaplaincy: A Practical Guide* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 16.

10. Wendy Cadge and Sally Rambo, “Introduction,” in *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, ed. Wendy Cadge and Sally Rambo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 14.

In a world where the sacred may often seem very distant from the day-to-day aspects of life, a sudden event of violence, danger, or loss can altogether alter the human perspective on ultimate questions of life and death. Grefe, McCarroll and Ansari state,

sometimes, the sacred is perceived as a compassionate presence that abides alongside suffering, a sense of “sacred presence” in the room. Other times, the sacred is perceived in the details of the care seeker-chaplain encounter where trust builds, and connection deepens. Sometimes the sacred is perceived through the presence of the chaplain offering rituals of meaning and transition; other times, the sacred is perceived within the soul and life of a care seeker—their inherent dignity, glimpsed in real time.¹¹

Whatever the perspective of those experiencing pain or loss, the chaplain becomes available to display and to convey a connection to that sacredness which reaches to where deep hurt is felt.

The presence of God is at the center of the sacredness that chaplains convey through their own “ministry of presence.” The chaplain reflects the acknowledgement by Jesus that he is present whenever two or three persons are gathered in his name (Matt 18:20). The chaplain in this instance is being both with others and with God.¹² God is present through “the presence of his divine activity” and in all times and places “God is present as God really is.”¹³ In time of sudden tragedy and suffering, there may be either great turning away from or toward God. This could be the case for those either with or

11. Dagmar Grefe, Pamela McCarroll, and Bilala Ansari, “Making Meaning in Chaplaincy Practice: Presence, Assessment, and Interventions,” in *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, eds. Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 68.

12. Neil Holm, “Toward a Theology of the Ministry of Presence in Chaplaincy,” *Journal of Christian Education* 52, no. 1 (2009): 8.

13. Ingolf U. Dalferth, *Becoming Present: An Inquiry into the Christian Sense of the Presence of God* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 83.

without a belief in God. Still, many persons will be susceptible to “signals of transcendence” by God or that which N. T. Wright refers to as “echoes of a voice.”¹⁴

The diversity of faith traditions among those that police chaplains encounter can create challenging settings for appropriately articulating a sacredness or presence of God to the difficult setting. Chaplains through their training “learn to pivot away from evaluation and judgment in order to develop an empathetic understanding of the care seeker’s inner world.”¹⁵ Whatever the context of faith background, chaplains dealing with crisis situations and their aftermath provide opportunities for police chaplains to validate and normalize the actions and reactions of those in distress.¹⁶

While participation in organized religion is waning within the population, chaplains continue to fill important roles of “meaning making in the face of life transitions and boundary situations.”¹⁷ These many and varied experiences can be validated or commemorated with meaning through rituals or simply adherence to support methods that are informed by theological training and background. Chaplains that can accompany persons as they encounter boundary situations regarding death and loss are able to offer a resource that other roles in police departments, for instance, would be unable to fulfill. Suffering in these settings can remain incomprehensible and without

14. Peter L. Berger, *A Rumour of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1969), 70; N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010), 20; Holm, “Toward a Theology,” 18.

15. Grefe, McCarroll, and Ansari, “Making Meaning,” 69.

16. Grefe, McCarroll, and Ansari, “Making Meaning,” 71.

17. Dagmar Grefe and Pamela McCarroll, “Introduction to Meaning-Making Competencies” in *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, eds. Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 62.

perceived meaning for those that are confronted with sudden traumatic events.¹⁸ The police chaplain exhibits a “meaning-making competency” that allows him or her to be a representation of the sacred and spiritual aspects of life for those caught up in trauma.¹⁹ The capacity to accomplish this requires that chaplains effectively translate an inherently spiritual domain into secular and often very public settings. Ultimately, that capacity requires a personal reservoir of faith to be able to convey God’s presence where doubts about that presence can be all too available to those that are suffering loss.

Spiritual Healing and Self Care

A person cannot be wholly well unless the whole body is well. When the mind and emotion of an individual are distraught with pain of loss, that person cannot function properly and fully. Therefore, chaplains attempt to make space for persons to see a path to renewed wholeness. In the moments of immediate loss, recapturing equilibrium of one’s being can seem very distant. Still, the spiritual counsel of the chaplain offers a reminder that while loss is significant and painful, there is solace to be found. The trained chaplain engages the client in the context of the client’s own spiritual beliefs or tradition to give hope and reassurance even in points of deepest pain.

For both the chaplain and those that are served, spiritual healing is a needed process. Chaplains that routinely encounter aftermath of tragedy, violence, and loss are susceptible to vicarious trauma from those situations. Remaining resilient requires self-care that is more than superficial acts that fail to assuage such conditions as moral injury or moral distress. Compassion fatigue is another result of absence of ongoing spiritual

18. Grefe and McCarroll, “Introduction,” 63.

19. Grefe and McCarroll, “Introduction,” 65.

replenishment and self-care in chaplains. Christ himself went away to private space to pray and replenish his human spirit. In fact, attentiveness to chronic ills such as stress, depression, and burnout can point to wider, Christ-focused, perspective on perseverance without distress. Henri Nouwen, in *The Wounded Healer*, described the minister as “the articulator of the life within,” adding that “the God within demands attention as never before.”²⁰

Approaching a biblical sense of human wholeness can benefit in embracing concepts from psychology and Christian practice can attend to the “whole person.” Christocentric psychology can draw from Jungian psychology, positive psychology, and other approaches, along with health and wellness research to further understand and address “whole person” wellbeing. However, wellbeing in many settings is still often regarded in the absence of any spiritual dimensions. Certainly, whole person wellbeing encompasses the spiritual lives of individuals. Healing of the human soul is central to the Gospel message. Peter’s healing of the lame man (Acts 3:16) is described by *holokleria*, a term referring to “perfect health.” Paul at the close of Second Thessalonians (5:23) writes, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may *your spirit and soul and body* be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (emphasis added). Central to these are the idea of wholeness, corresponding to the widely recognized definition of health and wellbeing by the World Health Organization as not merely the (absence of disease).²¹

20. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Doubleday, 1972), 41.

21. Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Minister* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 234.
(emp

Jeremiah, a prophet called by God, experienced distress that cried out for healing not just for the nation but for himself:

I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with hewn stones; he has made my paths crooked. (Lam 3:1–9)

Police chaplains are confronted with an ongoing exposure to raw pain and suffering.

They deliver their service to those at the most distraught points in their lives. In doing these tasks repeatedly, they accumulate experience that can lead unwittingly to bearing emotional pain in themselves. Anderson notes that “the spiritual core of the self is the source of emotional healing” and “recovery is a spiritual journey from overcoming the losses, hindrances, and problems that we suffer, to becoming the person were created to be: spiritual healing begins with the recovery of hope.”²² While police chaplains, staff and volunteer alike, bring a measure of resilience to their vocational calling, they also require self- and external monitoring to ensure that the burden of unrelenting service in traumatic settings does not destroy hope in those servants.

Theoretical Frameworks

Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model of Human Wellbeing

Increasingly, various secular settings for pastoral care are identified as “organizational chaplaincy” or “corporate chaplaincy.” A major feature of this type of care involves “walking the floor” whereby chaplains can act as a “listening ear” and

22. Ray S. Anderson, *Self-Care: A Theology of Personal Empowerment & Spiritual Healing* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 236.

source of comfort for those whom they have responsibility for in offering spiritual support where those persons may have little or no formal religious affiliations.²³ Meanwhile, organizations have become more inclined to engage support for workers whose overall physical, mental, and emotional health impedes productivity. The Integration Box, developed by the Center for Faith and Culture at Yale University, identifies four aspects of faith in the workplace related to ethics, evangelism, enrichment, and experience. Of these, the experiential aspect of the police role seems paramount, as they deal with “questions of vocation, calling, meaning, and purpose in and through their marketplace professions.”²⁴ Amid this professional life, police chaplains, as other staff and officers, may struggle with tension between job and family, where both aspects are important to maintaining a positive work life.²⁵ The difficulties of balance exist between vocational responsibilities for police serving in chaplaincy roles, both as staff and as volunteers.

Wellbeing of police chaplains is often compromised through all these situations. Wellbeing, though a subjective construct, is amenable to objective analysis. Research on wellbeing often engages equally with the constructs and study of happiness, “the good life,” and human flourishing.²⁶ Wellbeing encompasses the scope of a person’s life that is often encompassed in the “mind, body, and spirit” domains. In modern societies, the

23. David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 114.

24. Miller, *God at Work*, 135.

25. Thomas Moore, *A Life at Work: The Joy of Discovering What You Were Born to Do* (New York: Broadway Books, 2008), 176.

26. William C. Compton and Edward Hoffman, *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2020), 49.

preeminence of careers and a work-oriented mindset impacts achievement and maintenance of holistic wellbeing in many ways. Gallup has examined various dimensions of wellbeing in the U. S. for many years, consistently noting that “career wellbeing is the foundation for the other wellbeing elements.”²⁷ This focus on wellbeing within a secular, work-oriented viewpoint somewhat ironically makes infrequent reference to faith and spirituality despite 82 percent of Americans stating that they are religious or spiritual or both.²⁸ The likelihood that many of those persons may associate their overall wellbeing with their beliefs or faith practices would suggest the impropriety of disregarding the spiritual dimensions relating to human wellbeing even in work and secular organizational contexts.

At its most extreme, burnout represents the stage where workers abandon interest and energy for their job. Burnout is a phenomenon that can occur in many occupations, including police chaplains where engagement with trauma and violence, challenging schedules and duties, and ongoing training requirements persist. The policing role itself is subject to aspects of these phenomena as recruiting and retaining new officers is challenging. MNPDP Police Academy graduates declined in number every year from 2011 through 2020.²⁹ The real or perceived ability of chaplains or officers to have control over

27. Jim Clifton and Jim Harter, *Wellbeing at Work: How to Build Resilient and Thriving Teams* (New York: Gallup Press, 2021), 121.

28. Michael Lipka and Claire Gecewica, “More Americans Now Say They’re Spiritual but not Religious,” Pew Research, September 6, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/06/more-americans-now-say-theyre-spiritual-but-not-religious/>.

29. Samantha Max, “Rethinking the Police Academy: As Nashville’s Police Academy Grapples with High Dropout Rates, New Leaders Tone Down the Stress,” *90.3 WPLN News*, February 11, 2022. <https://wpln.org/post/rethinking-the-police-academy-as-nashvilles-police-academy-grapples-with-high-dropout-rates-new-leaders-tone-down-the-stress/>.

their situation or to be effective in their roles not only can compromise their work outcomes but may lead to more harmful levels of personal distress for officers in their personal lives and in their households. Staff police chaplains hold in balance the dual distress of serving internal staff and of meeting the considerable external needs associated with critical incidents.

Marginality and vulnerability are aspects of life that cause individuals and communities to harbor stress and anxiety. Work settings and occupations that are involved with low or declining levels of intrinsic and extrinsic support for the professional and vocational contributions of workers can produce feelings of burnout.³⁰ Perceived organizational support for police activity of all types can strengthen or weaken commitment across all roles to their jobs. These attitudes can be manifested in three ways: the cognitive component of how things are, such as low or no pay or difficult conditions; an affective component that represents an emotional reaction; and a behavioral component that represents intent and action, such as leaving a job.³¹ The association of one's personal worth with one's occupational identity is common in modern society, resulting in situations where persons are able to experience fulfillment and self-worth only or largely through success in work roles. In this regard, an organization's ability to be more expansive in fostering connection between body, mind, and spirit of its workforce can serve as both useful and desirable.³² Research has shown

30. Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A Judge, *Organizational Behavior* (Boston: Pearson, 2017), 116–22.

31. Robbins and Judge, *Organizational Behavior*, 113.

32. William A. Guillory, *Spirituality in the Workplace: A Guide for Adapting to the Chaotically Changing Workplace* (Salt Lake City: Innovations International Inc. Publishing, 1997), xi.

examples of work-life balance suggesting that life satisfaction is a function of “equally moderate- to-high levels of satisfaction in important life domains.”³³ This encompasses the eudemonic understanding of wellbeing as “fulfilling one’s potential or developing to the fullest extent one’s skills, talents, or personality.”³⁴

The ability to offer “soul care” is often segmented into various professional roles in organizations.³⁵ Services functioning as psychotherapy, spiritual direction, and pastoral counseling each focus on issues of the whole person and his or her inner self.³⁶ Employee assistance programs (EAP) routinely are anchored in addressing mental health issues of employees through the lens of psychology and psychiatric care. While EAP programs are widespread in the U.S., their purview may not always address whole person issues and needs, particularly with recognition of the role and importance of spirituality. Research has shown a need for improving the spiritual aspect of whole person care in a variety of clinical medical settings.³⁷ The MNPD system offers a robust EAP service to current and retired department officers, staff, and their family members to assist with a host of personal issues. The program, known as Police Advocacy and Support Services (PASS) began in 1986 and has a staff of six full-time police crisis counselors who provide

33. M. Joseph Sirgy and D. J. Lee, “The Psychology of Life Balance,” in *Handbook of Well-being*, eds. Ed Diener, S. Dishi, and L. Tay (Salt Lake City: DEF Publishers, 2018), 876.

34. Compton and Hoffman, *Positive Psychology*, 56.

35. Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 23.

36. David G. Benner, *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 18.

37. Christina M. Puchalski et al., “Improving the Spiritual Dimension of Whole Person Care: Reaching National and International Consensus,” *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 17, no. 6 (2014): 642.

confidential assistance to those persons.³⁸ These counselors have been a combination of staffed and contract employees. These matters can include counseling on work-life stresses and conflicts such as marital, family, personally, or work-related matters. A peer support program complements the PASS program that has fifty-five trained peer supporters works in conjunction with the Davidson County Sheriff's Office, the 911 call center, Nashville Fire Department, university police departments, and other agencies.³⁹ Lastly, MNPD operates its robust chaplaincy program with two full-time staff chaplains, one part-time staff chaplain, and thirty-three volunteer chaplains whose primary functions are to provide support services to victims of crime and the community.⁴⁰

Police chaplains in many respects act as agents of information sharing where they serve as conduits of bad news to persons after a critical incident. The ability of chaplains to navigate this treacherous and uncertain space requires skill and fortitude to repeatedly enter these situations. Workers in crisis settings like these do well in understanding the psychobiological effects of trauma along with the spiritual implications of the event for all involved.⁴¹ It can be useful to let persons experiencing trauma know that “they are not going ‘nuts.’”⁴²

By offering a trained, intentional spirit of healing for persons experiencing distress, chaplains and spiritual care resources can serve a need that involves moving

38. Copple et al., *Law Enforcement*, 60.

39. Copple et al., *Law Enforcement*, 61.

40. Copple et al., *Law Enforcement*, 61.

41. Richard K. James, *Crisis Intervention Strategies* (Belmont, CA: Thomson, 2008), 49.

42. James, *Crisis*, 49.

“outward from the boundaries of the church.”⁴³ Chaplains are trained to offer a quiet presence amid times of turbulence facing the soul and spirit of those around. Alan Baker describes the role in this way: “Chaplains invite a safe space for sustaining a sacred conversation immune from distractions.”⁴⁴ Chaplaincy offers spiritual, pastoral care where often no other immediate means of solace is available. Increasingly, secular settings of many types—from airports to seaports to ordinary workplaces—become places of both need and opportunity for chaplains. Police departments represent a type of “total institution” where chaplains are needed to offer services that could not otherwise be delivered by other staff members not specifically trained in the practices of chaplaincy and grounded in spiritual care background and skills. Total institutions are those that are encompassing, where many activities are conducted; that are combining, where different aspects of life are combined; that are organized, often hierarchically; that feature family autonomy, where family life for those in police roles, including staff and volunteer chaplains, is highly separated from institutional work life; and that often create lifelong affiliations and bonds.⁴⁵

Police chaplains themselves are highly linked to the mission and identity of their police departments. This identity linked to chaplaincy can seem strange or off-putting to some. A similar tension can exist in other environments like prisons where matters of crime or violence reside alongside a theologically trained person who is charged with providing spiritual care within the context of that institution and the persons connected

43. Baker, *Foundations*, 14.

44. Baker, *Foundations*, 21.

45. Baker, *Foundations*, 25.

with it and its work in some way. Inevitably, those persons that experience challenge or trauma of some type can find themselves bringing both their burdens and seeking resources to cope with those burdens. The orienting systems that chaplains then enter into with those persons is a “material, biological, psychological, social, and spiritual frame of reference for thinking about and dealing with life situations.”⁴⁶ For police chaplains, ministering to those in the external community that experience loss and trauma, meeting this array of spiritual frames presents a formidable threshold to adequately serve. It is in this space as well that innovation in practices becomes a worthwhile consideration.

Positive psychology, since the 1990s, has functioned as a branch of psychology with a mission to build human strength, nurture genius, and increase understanding of wellbeing.⁴⁷ Many aspects of positive psychology recognize the importance of spirituality and religion on human wellbeing.⁴⁸ Peacock and Paloma found that one’s perceived “closeness to God was the single biggest determinant of life satisfaction across all ages.”⁴⁹ Life satisfaction is thus not at odds with the human condition. Further, “counting it all joy” amid adversity (Jas 1:2) need not be the only setting for Christian happiness. Christians are also encouraged that “the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15:13).

46. Kenneth I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997), 102.

47. Compton and Hoffman, *Positive Psychology*, 1.

48. James Meredith Day, “Religion and Human Development in Adulthood: Well-being, Prosocial Behavior and Religious and Spiritual Development,” *Behavioral Development Bulletin* 22 (2017): 299.

49. Compton and Hoffman, *Positive Psychology*, 306; James Peacock and Margaret Poloma, “Religiosity and Life Satisfaction Across the Life Course,” *Social Indicators Research* 48 (1999): 321–45.

For this, a unique type of happiness, termed *noetic* happiness, may arise as a phenomenon of wellbeing identified through a spiritual dimension.⁵⁰

Happiness and life satisfaction research demonstrates how humans can experience greater and lesser levels of wellbeing across metrics that address many of the domains. Wellbeing is a term that is increasingly used across a variety of disciplines. Individual wellbeing requires congruent and identifiable levels of life-affirming and fulfilling measures achieved across a spectrum of wellness in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual domains. The biopsychosocial model provides an analogy from clinical medicine to illustrate the interrelatedness of many aspects of life to one another.⁵¹ Formulated by George Engel in 1977, this model has been extended with a spiritual component that includes a quantifiable role for spiritual support for medical patients, value of spiritual-religious coping, role of spirituality of physicians, and effects of spiritual complementary therapies.⁵² Adaptations of this model for non-clinical understanding of addressing whole personal wellbeing may align with spiritual care services for secular settings such as that of police chaplaincy and its focus on restoring equilibrium of wellbeing for those experiencing trauma.

50. Paul Wong, "Courage, Faith, Meaning, and Mature Happiness in Dangerous Times," *Positive Living Newsletter*, accessed 12 October 2023, <http://www.drpaulwong.com/inpm-presidents-report-may-2016>.

51. Francesc Borrell-Carrio, Anthony L. Suchman, and Ronald M. Epstein, "The Biopsychosocial Model 25 Years Later: Principles, Practice, and Scientific Inquiry," *Annals of Family Medicine* 2, no. 6 (2004): 581.

52. Marcelo Saad, Roberta de Medeiros, and Amanda Cristina Mosini, "Are We Ready for a True Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model? The Many Meanings of 'Spiritual'," *Medicines (Basel)* 4, no. 4 (2017): 79.

Psychotherapy and pastoral services can be integrated, as appropriate, for the greater good of the persons receiving chaplaincy services. This “integration in the therapy room” represents one space on the continuum where those requiring multiple approaches can access those services.⁵³ Further, the body of scientific evidence for the efficacy of relating spiritual care to a wider sense of human health and wellbeing is large and growing, with great applicability for chaplaincy services oriented toward the public safety and other professions.⁵⁴ Clinicians recognize that a sense of an individual’s will to persist can generate the hopefulness that is essential to mitigate depression, demoralization, and meaninglessness.⁵⁵ A second aspect of hope involves “wayfulness” wherein an individual places hope, trust, and confidence in someone or something.⁵⁶ In distinguishing between the concepts of healing and curing, individuals can find that evoking hope likely may not bring a “cure” to all problems but will offer the help to move forward with greater clarity intent.⁵⁷ In light of the significant challenges inherent in police chaplaincy, providing ways to enhance this resolve of hopefulness with broadened approaches and perspectives on life, work, and vocation from a spiritual foundation presents new and important opportunity.

53. Moon and Benner, *Spiritual Direction*, 189.

54. Daniel H. Grosseohme, “The Role of Science in Enhancing Spiritual Care Practice,” in *Chaplaincy and the Soul of Health and Social Care*, eds. Ewan Kelly and John Swinton (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2020), 98.

55. Carolina E. Yahne and William R. Miller, “Evoking Hope,” in *Integrating Spirituality into Treatment*, ed. William R. Miller (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 1999), 220.

56. C. R. Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get Here from There* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

57. Yahne and Miller, “Evoking Hope,” 229.

Rationale for Police Chaplaincy

Processes of providing spiritual care are often normalized in contemporary, extra-religious settings. Many para-religious entities specialize in training professionals for working within these situations. Reification of processes has created formal understanding of structure for meeting and serving human need in high stress environments. Preparation and training for chaplains across settings typically relies on standardized tools and practices such as taxonomy language through verbatims based on intervention encounters, simulation through spiritual care vignettes, and application of spiritual care assessments and plans for individuals and organizations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters described the context of police chaplaincy in Nashville and addressed the theological and theoretical frameworks within which the context of this ministry operates. This chapter will describe the role of qualitative research as methodological approach for the project. The project itself and its structure are outlined through the sequence of events and action and the description of participant roles. Lastly, the chapter covers the processes of evaluation of data and information and the use of triangulated assessment of the intervention and its resulting protocol artifacts.

Qualitative Research

I used qualitative research methods to develop a set of protocols with the input and direction of a group of staff and volunteer chaplains that serve in the MNPD Volunteer Chaplaincy program. These chaplains rely on a set of practices that help carry out the mission of the program which predominantly provides death notifications to family of persons deceased in Davidson County due to violence, disaster, or accidental injury.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recording, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. 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.¹

The project required a group of experienced police chaplains to guide development of protocols to assess potential new practices. The team comprised a group of between four to six chaplains in a series of four convened sessions. This group explored the theological and practical considerations implicit in delivering spiritual care in this example of practical theology ministry. These theological and practical considerations reflect the points identified in chapter 2, namely that chaplaincy is a ministry of presence that offers connectivity between God's transcendent presence and persons caught up in suffering and loss. The team through their experience described many instances of sharing the burden of trauma as a core feature of their role. The emphasis on spiritual healing and self-care was a recurring matter of discussion and opinion. Qualitative methods allowed the participants to openly develop content of ideas and insights that could be coded and categorized in a series of steps that would guide construction of a set of protocols. Field notes and written evaluations from the group provided information for me to interpret the discussions. Iterative steps in the process offered opportunities for the team to understand and make observation on slippages that resulted and on assumptions that needed to be reoriented or modified.

Project Intervention

A qualitative multi-methods approach served as the methodology for implementing and evaluating this project. Strauss and Corbin define *qualitative research* as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or

1. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 3.

other means of quantification.”² Data were collected to discover concepts and themes that can be organized into an explanatory scheme that coheres with theory related to chaplaincy and spiritual care practices. The specific methodological approach relied on participatory action research. This research framework is defined as “a kind of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social relationship with one another in order to improve some condition or situation in which they are involved.”³ Qualitative inquiry drew from team discussions with MNPD chaplains regarding perspectives and insights related to the value and role that chaplaincy and spiritual care provide as a resource for addressing personal adversity.

The project intervention involved leading a team that developed protocols for enhancing the role and value of theologically grounded spiritual care resources that serve the MNPD, in those publics with which it engages. The resulting artifact is a body of protocols that can guide future implementation of enhancement and innovation in resources and services used in chaplaincy, pastoral care, and spiritual care. This intervention occurred within the context of the MNPD chaplaincy program with expanded engagement with chaplains with expertise in other similar local and national settings.

Description of the Participants

The project intervention involved a series of discussions with a team of staff and volunteer chaplains in MNPD regarding current and potential spiritual care practices. A

2. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1998), 10.

3. Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2009), 259; Shirley Grundy, “Three Modes of Action Research,” in *The Action Research Reader*, eds. Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (Geelong: Australia: Deakin University Press, 1988), 247.

consistent group of four to six staff and volunteer chaplains participated in each of the discussion sessions. These participants were selected through a process of purposive sampling. This selection method is common in qualitative research where participants can offer “information-rich” cases that provide depth of insights and experiences.⁴ In this inquiry process, MNPd chaplains are a singularly knowledgeable group regarding matters of spiritual care practices and represent typical case experiences in understanding and applying those practices. To the extent possible, participants represented a blend of longevity with the program, varied areas of responsibility, and both staff and volunteer roles.

Through a modified use of participatory action research, participating chaplains were part of the team process that engaged in inquiry leading to development of protocols for enhancing spiritual care resources and practices.⁵ The process relied primarily on the practical action research model where participants are mutually collaborative in bringing their “personal wisdom” to the situation where issues and problems are elicited through the team process led by myself as the facilitator.⁶

Description of the Project Sessions

The project intervention consisted of four sessions that involved teams of four to six chaplains each. I served as the facilitator of the sessions. The sessions were each approximately ninety minutes in length and each took place at the MNPd chaplaincy offices. The purpose of the sessions was to obtain perspective on ways that spiritual care

4. Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2002) 230; Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 83.

5. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 57–58.

6. Berg, *Qualitative Research*, 357.

and chaplaincy can work most effectively based on insights and experiences of participants. I led the teams through a series of topics that address reflection on various chaplaincy practices, identification of gaps and opportunities in chaplaincy practices, and assessment of potential enhancements and innovations in spiritual care activities. Information obtained through sessions, along with the body of research literature on chaplaincy practice innovations, guided development of an outline of topic areas and other considerations that were used iteratively through the sessions.

Guided Discussion Framework

The nature of the sessions was a discussion format where flow of ideas and responses to prompts led to open conversation and reflection on topics related to development of protocols for the program. Each session opened with a PowerPoint presentation and printed and oral outlines of objectives and content materials for the project overall as well as for the individual session.

Drafting of the Protocols

The ultimate objective of the guided discussions process was to develop a set of protocols that could be used by the MNPd chaplaincy program to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of innovative practice for the program. Each of the sessions afforded a setting for discussion that iteratively moved the process forward for development of these protocols. The participants were instructed that their somewhat open-ended input in session 1 would lead to emergence of categories and themes that could be evaluated and discussed in session 2. The results of session 2 discussion then provided the basis for development of a draft protocol instrument and process that participants reviewed and discussion in session 3. Stemming from that input and the

critique of outside chaplains, participants were able to consider the final stage of the protocols and engage in discussion intended to produce optimally operational protocols for future use. The overview of each of these steps was clearly outlined and reiterated at each of the convened sessions.

Participation Discussion Session Descriptions

The sessions involved a team of four to six MNPD staff and volunteer chaplains that reviewed a range of topics related to enhancements to spiritual care activities. Appendix D contains the discussion prompts used by the facilitator in each of the sessions.⁷ The categories and overall themes generated from the first session were organized by the facilitator following the session and made available for review and reflection by participants in session 2. Session 2 focused on the refinement of ideas developed from these themes and results of guided discussion in session 1 and provided the basis for development of a draft body of protocols through and following session 2. Three external chaplains reviewed the draft protocols following session 3. The input from the external review was instrumental in refining the protocols prior to discussion with the MNPD chaplains in session 4 to assess the protocol and conclude final recommendations.

Session 1: May 10, 2023

Session 1 introduced the project to the participants, following prior conversation with the chaplain coordinator who had understanding of and authorization for the convening. Five participants were present, three staff and two volunteer chaplains. In addition to the chaplains and myself, two notetakers and Dr. Carson Reed were present. Following introductions, I provided an overview of the project and its intended

7. See Appendix D.

objectives. The participants were selected through discussion between me and the chaplain coordinator to secure an informed and diverse set of experiences and insights regarding the MNPd chaplaincy program. Participants were provided with the overview document soliciting their involvement and invited to ask any questions beforehand as desired.

The session opened with an overview of the project aimed at the topic of assessing innovations in chaplaincy practice. Introductions of participants were followed by a statement slide describing spiritual care as “the act of communicating the inner meaning of God’s presence to persons at their point of need.” I provided an explanation that the outcomes of session 1 were to elicit broad ideas and concepts which would be coded and categorized in order for participants in the next session to discuss theological and practical aspects of those items in relation to chaplaincy practice.

The chaplain coordinator had indicated to me that, while this was an important and useful process, it was a new type of gathering for such a purpose in the program. The coordinator discussed with me the nature of this and subsequent sessions prior to convening the mutually agreed upon sample group of participants at the MNPd chaplain’s office meeting room. All the participants were well acquainted with one another and brought a considerable longevity with the MNPd chaplaincy program. A high level of camaraderie, friendship, and trust spoke to the commitment by participants to providing high quality chaplaincy services and to assisting in further growth and usefulness of the program.

The ninety-minute session began substantive discussion with the question of what new practices police chaplaincy can use to fulfill their mission and what criteria are

important in assessing and adopting those practices. Additionally, participants were encouraged to think about words that might be useful in actively considering a particular practice. This first question addressed potential terms that would lend themselves as criteria or requirements that could be useful in adopting or rejecting potential enhancements to spiritual care resources.

The task of word generation provided a useful prompt that elicited many terms. Green note cards were used for terms that corresponded with inspiring or exciting ideas for police chaplaincy while red note cards were used for terms that were uninspiring or unexciting for thinking about new or expanded chaplaincy activities. Participants also were instructed to mail in responses that addressed specific examples of chaplaincy practice. The first of the prompts referred to the use of social media.⁸ This was followed by arts therapy as a means to enhance chaplaincy and spiritual care practices.⁹ The role of telechaplaincy as a method to enhance chaplaincy work was included for further consideration.¹⁰ Lastly, the role of celebration and resilience was listed as a means to

8. Mary M. Atkinson, "E-Chaplaincy – Asking Some Questions," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 71, no. 1 (2017): 69–72.

9. Sarah Tucker and Johannes M. Luetz, "Art Therapy and Prison Chaplaincy: A Review of Contemporary Practices Considering New Testament Teachings," in *Innovating Christian Education Research*, eds. Johannes M. Luetz and Beth Green (Singapore: Springer, 2021), 221-238; Rachel Ettun, Michael Schultz, and Gil Bar-Sela, "Transforming Pain into Beauty: On Art, Healing, and Care for the Spirit," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* Article ID 789852 (2014); Keith Crabtree, "Chaplain Kimberly Russell Uses Creative Talent to Adapt Spiritual Care Board for St. Jude Patients," St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, accessed 19 October 2023, <https://www.stjude.org/about-st-jude/stories/making-a-difference/chaplain-kimberly-russell-uses-creative-talent-to-adapt-spiritual-care-board-for-st-jude-patients.html#:~:text=Kimberly%20Russell%2C%20a%20staff%20chaplain,their%20spiritual%20needs%20and%20emotions.>

10. "Telehealth Guidelines for Spiritual Care," Spiritual Health Association Australia: Department of Health 2020, accessed 15 September 2023, <https://www.spiritualhealth.org.au/standards>.

enhance practices in the MNPD chaplaincy program.¹¹ Discussion at the time suggested that some of these were very pertinent to the work of the program while others likely had limited appeal across the range of volunteer chaplains.

The conclusion of the session involved brief discussion of expanded community chaplaincy activities, issues of training for chaplains, and staffing needs for expanded chaplaincy activity. Participants seemed very engaged and forthcoming in generating topics, terms, and ideas for chaplaincy practices in general but less comfortable in addressing practices which they were not familiar with or involved with. This gave an early indication of the somewhat limited range of activities which volunteer chaplains had experience with. Even so, the inputs in session 1 proved very useful in framing the conversation for developing thematic coding and categorization that would be applied to the session 2 processes.

Session 2: August 30, 2023

The second session was conducted with five chaplains participating, again including both staff and volunteers. Following session 1, I coded the terms which were offered by participants as either inspiring and exciting or uninspiring and unexciting in relation to chaplaincy practices. All terms and concepts that were suggested were considered in the context within which they were discussed. It became clear that the role and characteristics of chaplains in the program formed two sets of terminology while another group fell into the dimensions of constraints and challenges facing chaplaincy practice.

11. Steven Spidell, "Resilience and Professional Chaplaincy: A Paradigm Shift in Focus," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 20, no. 1: 16–24.

























Since chaplaincy is highly predicated on the foundation of practical theology, it was important to discern what aspects of chaplaincy were more essentially part of the theological foundation of the work versus those matters of practicality of bringing that service into reality. Therefore, the framework for session 2 coalesced into a structure within which participants could begin to cast these concepts of theological and practical constructs into steps that would be suitable for a further discernment process.

Based on the categories that emerged through coding of information from session 1, participants were asked to rank the theological and the practical aspects of key concepts in relation to the role of chaplaincy, the challenges of chaplaincy, and the constraints of chaplaincy.

Figure 1. Perceived Relevance of Practical and Theological Aspects

PRACTICAL	ROLE		THEOLOGICAL
1. _____	Comfort	Relief	1. _____
2. _____	Meet Crisis/ Grief/ Pain	Resource	2. _____
3. _____	Outreach	Restore Normality	3. _____
	Pastoral	Sense of Forgiveness	
CHARACTERISTICS			
1. _____	Available	Support	1. _____
2. _____	Calm	Trained	2. _____
3. _____	Non-anxious	Trust	3. _____
	Sharing		
CONSTRAINTS			
1. _____	Distance	Training	1. _____
2. _____	Financial	Time	2. _____
3. _____	Technical		3. _____
CHALLENGES			
1. _____	Complication/ Ease	Language	1. _____
2. _____	Health/ Safety (e.g., COVID)	Tedious	2. _____
3. _____	Generational	The Unknown	3. _____
	Helplessness	Trauma	

Figure 2. Rating Protocol for Hypothetical Practice

Innovative Activities or Practices				
	<i>Please circle</i>			<i>Any Comments</i>
Arts Therapy		?		_____
Celebration Activities		?		_____
Chaplaincy Hotline		?		_____
Notification Follow up's		?		_____
Recognition Activities		?		_____
Resilience Activities		?		_____
Resources/ Information Links		?		_____
Social Media Use		?		_____
Telechaplaincy		?		_____
Therapy Animals		?		_____
Others? _____		?		_____
_____		?		_____

After completing these ranked items individually, participants were guided in discussion of those categories which interested or excited them most and least in relation to innovative practices for chaplaincy. The observations varied across the range of innovations offered for consideration.

Arts therapy generated overall negative or neutral reactions as an example. This seemed like an unfamiliar practice to them as well as one that they would be unlikely to use in their current set of activities. This was the only suggested practice that resulted in fairly wide disinterest by the group. This and other reactions suggested the need for greater elaboration of potential settings, uses, and outcomes that may be associated with given practice proposals.

The area of celebration, recognition, and resilience activities generated more favorable responses. The chaplains cited current recognition events such as banquet dinners which they felt were highly regarded by the volunteers. The prior discussion regarding specific designations to recognize longevity of service or special accomplishments and duties did not seem to be embraced as strongly in the second session. The matter of resilience activities resonated strongly with all participants. Given the difficulty of chaplain duties, all persons agreed that there is great need for counseling services to be available to chaplains. While there are initiatives in the volunteer chaplain program for mentoring and working in a “buddy system,” more assistance to the overall wellbeing of chaplains was highly desired. This created a level of enthusiasm for the protocol process as participants were able to identify tangible ways that they could benefit apart from simply assessing practices that were unappealing to them, potentially time-consuming with little benefit to them, or both. It was in this area of discussion that there was a breakthrough in the discussion such that chaplains felt that discussion was deeply in the space that they inhabited.

In terms of technical enhancements to the work of the chaplains, there were mixed reactions. While there was considerable conversation about the limitations inherent for volunteer chaplains to access information needed to contact persons for death notifications, in this session there was more agreement that no systematic changes seemed feasible in light of security and privacy issues. The discussion did, however, prompt some discussion on the opportunities that protocols could provide in identifying more specifically resource needs for more systemic changes or enhancements to occur.

The issue of telechaplancy seemed to be understood in different ways by different participants. Telechaplancy has been defined as “the use of telecommunications and virtual technology (which can include but is not limited to, telephone, smartphone applications, live videoconferencing and internet interventions) to deliver spiritual and religious care by...chaplains or other religious/spiritual leaders.”¹² While this use of technology in healthcare and other settings offers ways of expanding and enhancing chaplancy services there are limitations such as cost of telehealth modalities, difficulty finding chaplains who are willing to practice telehealth, being perceived as less effective than in-person care, and fear of receiving a call due to associating the chaplain with death/bad news.¹³ Considerable study and use of telechaplancy has accelerated from the COVID pandemic onward. In the session some participants regarded telechaplancy as a potential expanded role for delivering wider sets of chaplancy services while others indicated that existing communications systems known as Cordico already in place do allow for families to be able to reach chaplains as needed. Similarly, there was a modest interest in uses of social media, though others seemed to be limited users of this technology. As with several of suggested practices, the generality of the terms resulted in sometimes ambiguous reactions. These occurrences raised the idea among the group for the need for clarity in the description of a practice and also the opportunity for a proposed practice to illustrate more completely how it would be used and to what purpose.

12. Petra J. Sprik et al., “Feasibility and Acceptability of a Telephone-based Chaplancy Intervention in a Large, Outpatient Oncology Center,” *Supportive Care in Cancer* 29, no. 3 (2021): 2.

13. Ayal Pierce et al., “Emergency Department Approach to Spirituality Care in the Era of COVID-19,” *American Journal of Emergency Medicine* 46 (2020): 765–68.

Chaplains expressed considerable interest in the topic of follow up opportunities to those that receive death notifications. Currently, following up is left to the discretion of the individual chaplain. Sometimes family members themselves follow up with the chaplains. Here, the constraints of time seemed to weigh heavily on the chaplains despite their recognition that more follow up would be a good thing. Some participants noted that follow up encounters must be handled skillfully as some situations can lead to more complex and time-intensive interactions.

The team discussed the use of therapy animals in police chaplaincy as a resource for chaplains as well as for the persons served by chaplains. There was familiarity with and support for reviewing the use of therapy animals based on the department's positive experience with a therapy dog, "Toby," already a part of the program. Currently, the dog is used and maintained by an officer chaplain and not as part of the work of the volunteers. Even so, there was much enthusiasm about the program and interest to include this as an example of further enhancement potential. The commitment of the department to the therapy dog program seems well anchored in the work of the chaplaincy program. The affiliation with therapy dogs trained for public safety organizations has allowed this commitment to flourish.¹⁴

Session 3: September 20, 2023

The third session engaged five MNPd chaplains to review and reflect on the draft set of protocols for spiritual care enhancements and innovations developed following session 2. The protocols presented were additionally shaped and refined based

14. Lexipol, "How Therapy Dogs in Public Safety Benefit Personnel, Agencies & Communities," <https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/therapy-dogs-in-public-safety-benefits/>; Post research, Cordico has undergone a name transition. It is now known as Lexipol.

on the input of the three external chaplains. Participants in session 3 were guided to discuss which areas of the protocols seemed strongest and weakest. The participants were also asked to discuss which aspects of the protocols were considered most and least needed or relevant.

Participants engaged in discussion regarding elements of the protocols that should be added or removed, expanded, or shortened. Some participants seemed more confident in suggesting modifications than did others. The strongest sentiment coalesced around the practical aspects of chaplaincy practices. Because of the focus on death notifications as a major feature of the work, there was strong agreement voiced about the time constraints that chaplains face. It is not uncommon for chaplains to deliver multiple death notifications on a single eight-hour shift. These tend to be more commonly needed on weekends and on Mondays in the aftermath of the weekend.

Lastly, participants discussed in a free form manner which aspects of delivering chaplaincy and spiritual care resources seemed to resonate most through the draft protocols. The group indicated that the protocol instrument was generally workable although further simplification of the instrument seemed desirable. There was concurrence that the quantitative aspects of the instrument which dealt with cost-benefit assessment of potential innovative practices were largely within the purview of the staff chaplains rather than the volunteers. This further pointed to the need for specificity in any proposal for new practices in order that sufficient information can be developed to understand potential costs. One participant suggested that, in addition to the monetary costs and benefits of any practice, an element should be included that would identify any risks to the department, staff, or volunteers that may accompany a proposed practice. The

necessity for data and information integrity about critical incidents and persons that are party to death notifications stems from a number of privacy and security needs that are involved in police work.

Session 4: October 11, 2023

The fourth session provided the setting to complete a final review of the draft protocols in preparation for evaluation by an external group of three chaplains not affiliated with the MNPd chaplaincy program. The group was asked to identify aspects of the draft protocols which were strongest and weakest and which were most or least relevant to the objectives set out for the protocols. Based on these inputs, group conversation identified elements that should be added, removed, expanded, or shortened in the protocols.

The session went through step-by-step the content of the protocols along with methods of administering the protocols. These methods were designed based on group discussion in session 3 and refined by input and critique from three external chaplains as part of outside review. The protocols open with instruction that the protocols are intended for the MNPd to use in relation to assessing new practices and innovations for consideration in the chaplaincy program. The protocols further can be used as a set of process guidelines to assist in making thoughtful decisions that are guided by the practicalities of carrying out chaplaincy tasks and duties and the theological foundations that provide the rationale for police chaplaincy as a unique and important service.

The administrative guidelines accompanying the protocols are presented in four steps. Step one notes that the assessment instrument is to be completed by a group of five persons. These are to include the chaplain coordinator for MNPd, two additional MNPd

staff chaplains, and two MNPd volunteer chaplains. The volunteer chaplains are selected by the chaplain coordinator based on a blend of longevity and experience with the chaplaincy program. The five persons will be trained in the use of the assessment process and instrument by the chaplain coordinator or by an individual that he or she selects. Step one also states that proposed practices and innovations may be submitted to the chaplain coordinator at any time and that these may be submitted by any staff chaplain or any volunteer chaplain. The chaplain coordinator is identified as the person who will announce the opportunity for submitting proposals periodically at MNPd chaplaincy program events, trainings, and through other program communications. These submissions require a clear statement of what the proposed practice is designed to accomplish and what activities it entails. Sufficient description is also required for adequate understanding of those completing the assessment. Ancillary, supporting documentation may be included as needed and helpful. This may include any information about costs, technology, training, or other features which relate to a proposed practice.

The second administrative step for the protocols identifies that a group of five chaplains each will complete the instrument individually and separately. Upon completion, the chaplain coordinator will compile the results with equal weighting of final scores and recommendations from each of the five respondents. This step describes that if the score totals result in a recommendation to proceed, the chaplain coordinator will take additional steps to determine any cost/benefit aspects that are specific to implementing the practice. The results of this portion of the assessment will then be used in conjunction with the scored totals to determine whether full recommendation, partial

or pilot recommendation, delayed recommendation, or no recommendation is made to proceed with the practice.

The third administrative step states that the chaplain coordinator, upon final completion of the assessment instruments and scoring along with any accompanying cost/benefit data, will compile results and recommendations at least biannually or more frequently if deemed useful. Those practices that are recommended and receive favorable support for full, partial or pilot, or delayed introduction will be reported out at periodic gatherings of volunteer chaplains for training and recognition. Step three notes that persons submitting a proposal may contact the chaplain coordinator for follow-up information as desired. At that time, information about assessment, recommendations, or any needed modification or additional information regarding the proposal can be discussed with the chaplain coordinator.

Administrative step four instructs that as practices are implemented, the chaplain coordinator may use the assessment processes to determine their effectiveness and alignment with practical and theological aspects of chaplaincy. The process may also be used to assess options of modifying a practice, expanding a practice from partial or pilot status, or expanding or combining various types of practices.

Participants uniformly agreed that simplicity of administering the protocols was an imperative. The merging of practical and theological categories for rating the feasibility and importance of various proposals within the constructs of chaplain roles, characteristics, constraints, and challenges was well received in this final iteration. The group responded well to a participant suggestion that common language definitions for each of the rated variable terms would be helpful. For example, one participant asked

what the meanings of “forgiveness” and “the unknown” were in the context provided or whether there were multiple interpretations of these terms. In these cases, those persons that had initiated those terms in earlier discussion offered their reasons for suggesting these terms and what they understood them to be. This prompted a discussion of adding brief definitions that could serve to orient all potential users of the protocol instrument to a common understanding of their meaning at least as would pertain to this rating process.

Lastly, discussion took up the matter of resonance between the protocols and the overall mission of the chaplaincy program. Participants expressed satisfaction that the final protocols with the refinements were resonant with the intended objective. They further stated their gratitude for the opportunity to be involved with the discussion process and their anticipation that the protocols would serve multiple useful functions. These functions could include clarity in consideration of potential innovative practices, imposed structure to articulate practices and their requirements, opportunities to weigh merits of practices in a consistent manner, and means of developing “case-building” material that could advance department support for beneficial and desired practices.

Evaluation

By the conclusion of the four sessions, the already congenial group of participants seemed much more comfortable with the process and the ultimate objective of creating a workable protocol for assessing practices. Participants stated that various issues and topics came up in discussions which they had not heard previously nor had prior clear ideas about. The sense of the participants in the latter sessions increasingly seemed open and eager to offer ideas that built on prior conversations and to make constructive critique of the protocol itself.

The process of designing a protocol through a group endeavor seemed to elicit a clearer understanding of how the program sees its chaplaincy work, particularly in serving the death notification tasks. Based on examples in Figure 1, discussions evolved to point more clearly to those potential chaplaincy practices that are already related to some area of existing practice, those practices that might be very beneficial or desirable but that are tied to certain external constraints that are not easily overcome, and those practices that may be interesting or experimental but whose value is not clearly seen at this point. The group remained very enthusiastic about the idea of opportunities to pilot a practice before a full-scale launch. The introduction of practices whose quantitative, or cost-benefit, assessments could not be clearly known beforehand were offered as good examples of those instances where piloting a new practice would be most useful.

Data Collection

The project collected data from three angles—insider, outsider, and research—in order to triangulate data that were obtained from the three sources.¹⁵ At the end of each session, I reviewed and summarized the notes taken during the session. Since the initial session was pivotal to establishing the terms and concepts which would guide discussion and protocol development in subsequent sessions, an independent notetaker accompanied the session. The participants were informed about the nature of the project and provided with prompts for iterative discussions. At the same time, open conversation was encouraged that allowed for honest and creative expression of ideas and concerns to flourish. The aim of the sessions was to build a protocol framework that accurately reflected the needs, interests, and desires of the participants in the discussion as informed

15. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72–76.

representation of the staff and volunteer chaplains in MNPD. All field notes, sign-in documents, and other materials from each session are preserved and maintained in my possession.

Insider Angle

The insider angle was derived from the discussions elicited through the iterative processes of the four sessions. The inclusion of both staff and volunteer chaplains ensured that there was a range of experience and opinion represented. Similarly, there were male and female participants, older and younger individuals, and African American, Asian American, and Caucasian persons represented throughout the course of the four sessions.

The considerable longevity and diversity of expertise of discussion participants as insiders provided a high level of informed input into an array of topics posed for their consideration. A few items clearly resonated strongly with participants, particularly a desire for expanded counseling care for chaplains, an interest in expanding recognition of volunteer chaplains for their service, and an aspiration that chaplains could offer more follow up spiritual care assistance to families when both chaplains and families share a desire for this. The insider experience with the mechanics of delivering death notifications resulted in discussion about the considerable constraints that exist within the process of identifying family members prior to delivering death notifications. Here, the participants' understanding of the technical and information security requirements proved critical to noting the complexities and constraints involved with certain areas of potential practice and innovation.

Figure 3. Examples of Enhancements and Innovations in Practice

Practices	Comments
Arts Therapy	Not so feasible Unsure Used with children
Celebration Activities	Banquet functions this way
Chaplaincy Hotline	Cordico functions this way
Counseling for Chaplains/ Wellness Checks	Very useful and needed
Notification Follow up's	Be mindful of privacy Up to each chaplain Finding the time Issue of the unknown Family may follow up
Recognition Activities	Banquet functions this way
Resilience	Needed and desired
Resources/ Links to Information	Cordico functions this way TLO alternatives Tool to find family members
Social Media Use	Depends on the type Desire to do more
Telechaplaincy	Happens sometimes with staff chaplains Telecounseling opportunities
Therapy Animals	Currently used Soothe families

Outsider Angle

The outsider angle was obtained from input at a later stage of development of protocols by three expert chaplains not affiliated with MNPd. Each of the outsiders holds a doctoral degree and has worked as a professional chaplain in one or more settings. It was useful to have a diversity of representation from this group in order for the outsider angle to truly observe the content and mechanics of the protocols apart from direct involvement with either MNPd or police chaplaincy. These persons included one female and two males. The range of chaplaincy experiences involved healthcare chaplaincy, mental hospital chaplaincy, chaplaincy at an educational institution, and sports

chaplaincy. The religious affiliations of the outside chaplains were Church of Christ, United Church of Christ, and Roman Catholic.

The evaluation of the protocols relied on review of the draft artifact by three external professional chaplains serving in varied settings and with varied experience as leaders in the field of chaplaincy practice. These three chaplains were purposively selected for extensive professional experience, each working in different organizations and settings. They evaluated the outcome of the “insider” team process.¹⁶ This evaluation entailed use of a review form with open ended prompt questions relating to the content, applicability, flexibility, and appropriateness of the protocols as a framework for guiding enhancements to the role and value of chaplaincy and spiritual care practices. The evaluation content themes and items provided by the outside experts were integrated into development of the final set of protocols.

Outside experts were asked to review the draft protocols and to note general and any specific responses to a variety of prompts. These included overall perception of the protocols as a framework for enhancing chaplaincy and spiritual care resources; and applicability, flexibility, and appropriateness of the protocols to the goal of enhancing chaplaincy. Lastly, they were encouraged to provide any suggestions for any modifications, additions, or deletions of the draft protocols.

One external chaplain indicated that it is “a fantastic project.” The chaplain found the project meaningful and well-constructed as a narrative. Other comments remarked on appreciation for description of the narrative/qualitative research methods. Participatory

16. Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 245; Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 77.

action research was acknowledged as highly successful for chaplain-researchers. The draft protocol was regarded as relatively straightforward to use.

An area of recommendation from the first external chaplain was to use the overall issues of role, characteristics, and constraints of chaplaincy headings, but to clarify terms that were used. Examples such as “pastoral,” “resource,” and “relief” seemed to require more explicit description or definition. Including such definitions directly on the scoring instrument was recommended. Use of a scoring key was disfavored over incorporating the scoring system directly into the instrument items to be scored.

Another area of question stemmed from the distinction posed in the initial draft protocol between “practical” and “theological” aspects of chaplaincy. The dilemma encountered here was similar to the experiences voiced by session participants in session 3. While addressing the practical and theological aspects of some concepts was rather clear, there was confusion over examples such as how technical and financial constraints could be considered in a theological context. While session participants noted that using one’s time and wealth wisely as stewards for ministry was theologically supported, they felt that making this a distinction from the practical issues of resource use in the chaplaincy program was a stretch. Ultimately, this outsider input corroborated with the insider discussion prompted me to reorder the protocol instrument such that those completing the instrument for scoring were doing so for concepts in relation to a combined practical/theological framework. Lastly, the first outsider appreciated the instrument as visually appealing with a recommendation that adding definitions for terms should not detract from the existing simplicity of the instrument.

The second outsider equally judged the protocol instrument and administrative guidelines to be sound and workable for the intended objective. This person recommended more explanation at the opening of the administrative guidelines to articulate the nature of and need for the protocols. Subsequently, I expanded this description, and it was included in the draft protocol prior to session 4. Also, the outsider suggested encouraging those submitting proposed practices for consideration to elaborate on any special considerations and to attach justification material as needed. This was noted and shared with the chaplain coordinator in session 4 as an important element to communicate with persons that submit proposals and with those audiences at trainings and elsewhere that the protocol process was announced.

The outsider mentioned that in the matter of theological aspects, it may be helpful to understand the theological background of those proposing a practice. This would not necessarily be to justify a specific element of a practice but to demonstrate how certain denominations or theological viewpoints may emphasize certain things differently and therefore shift the findings of an assessment. Here also, I shared this suggestion with the discussion participants as a useful point for communicating this as an opportunity to be made available to those proposing a practice where those persons feel it would be a helpful component of articulating the practice and its merits.

The third outsider concurred that the protocols were fitting for the intended purpose and ministry context. The suggestions from this person included a recommendation for any informational materials on social resources to be available for chaplains to use in conjunction with interventions for grief. The chaplains in subsequent session 4 discussion identified ways that they provide information of this type. This

points to opportunities for potential innovative practices with the therapy dog now used by police chaplains. The other question regarded the types of orientation that volunteer chaplains receive in relation to their role and duties, including opportunities for ongoing training. The current MNPd chaplaincy program does provide a 6-hour onboarding training for new volunteer chaplains and periodic training opportunities, including invitation to participate in many trainings that MNPd provides for police officers. Even so, innovative practices may be available that would extend the frequency, modalities, or other aspects of training for volunteers. To date, very limited funding or support has been available for MNPd volunteer chaplain skill development apart from that offered through the department.

The third outsider also reinforced the importance of the theological foundations that are critical to successful chaplaincy, and by extension to assessing practices for this field. The matters of meaning and purpose, love, forgiveness, understanding truth, hope, and relationship quality with God and others are essential to the practices of chaplaincy, as named by this longtime chaplain.

Researcher Angle

My role in the triangulation of assessing data and information was one of a highly interested and motivated relative newcomer to the field of police chaplaincy. After many months of informal conversations with local and national leaders in chaplaincy in general, I began to develop an understanding of the field with a bit of clarity. Not coming from any background with police chaplaincy, I felt that I could rely on my relative novice status in that area as a positive aspect of the researcher angle in the project. The insider angle brought years and decades of experience and insight specific to police chaplaincy.

The outsider angle brought a rich and diverse set of eyes and perception of the project drawn from longtime service in chaplaincy roles not specific to police chaplaincy. In these three angles, there was a blend of freshness and admittedly naivete on my part complemented by consideration by those very close to police chaplaincy and their context and by those very close to chaplaincy overall in multiple contexts.

Data Analysis

Prepare the Data

Throughout each of the four sessions, I took notes using the form identified in Appendix F. At the end of each session, I completed the form based on notes taken during the session and my observations of what occurred during the conversations with the participants. Field notes in general serve as “running descriptions of settings, people, activities, and sounds” pertinent to the conversations in each session.¹⁷ These functioned as my interpretation of the content and meaning of discussion by the team participants. The note taking process comprised an introduction of the group participants, transcription of discussion and activity, reflection on the events and issues, assessment of the event, consideration of matters for future sessions, and a theological analysis and evaluation of the overall process as a ministry context.¹⁸ In the sessions I used the discussion prompts to move through the conversation while purposely providing limited guidance on types of responses in order for participants to feel free to express themselves openly and without predetermined parameters. In each session I encouraged the conversations to flow freely openly, and organically. In addition to note taking on the discussion content, I observed

17. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 182.

18. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 192.

for key details of emotional inflection, open or closed body language suggestive of emotional responses, concurring or alternate critiques or reactions to comments, and interpersonal group and relational dynamics. The consistency of several of these observed phenomena over the course of the sessions diminished some of the challenge of capturing unexpected observed items.

Develop Categories and a Coding Scheme

Content analysis comprised the means by which patterns and themes were identified from the data collected in the project. Content analysis is “a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a body of material to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings.”¹⁹ A coding frame guided the processes of organizing and collecting data for analysis. Initial open coding of material from field notes provided a basis for assessing topics of greatest interest and importance to the MNPD chaplain respondents. No contraindications of important topics were noted through comparison with literature on chaplaincy practices. Topics relative to practices included efficacy, sustainability, frequency, and feasibility. Following this stage, open and axial coding of data obtained from the first two group team sessions through field notes provided the basis for establishing categories that are grounded in spiritual care practice.²⁰ The convergence of data around shared sentiments, preferences, and attitudes by participating team chaplains toward practices was assessed in order to develop a draft protocol document for introduction at session 3. Divergent data were noted and presented apart from the draft protocol document in session 3 with opportunity for participants to reflect

19. Berg, *Qualitative Research*, 338.

20. Berg, *Qualitative Research*, 362.

on these. Following reaction to and revision of the draft document in session 3 by MNPD chaplains and separately by a group of three external chaplains, the document was assessed independently through content analysis to identify categories in order to determine patterns and to compare and confirm those patterns with theological and theoretical literature and theory.²¹ This resulted in the final draft set of protocols for final review and reflection by the team in session 4.

Coding Methods

Coding of data was done in several stages. Following the first session, response information was coded into categories related to the role, characteristics, challenges, and constraints that attach to chaplains. These categories then provided the basis for session 2's exercise for ranking the constructs within each category for their relevance to the two aspects of chaplaincy work, the practical and the theological.

Data results from the ranking activity in session 1 provided the basis to rank order the aggregate responses into each of the categories. From the additional discussion on the use of these in a protocol instrument, I developed a draft instrument that was shared with the outsider chaplains for their review and with the participants in session 3 for their consideration. The discussion in session 3 was primarily reflective on the ease of use and clarity of the draft instrument. No additional information was gathered that required coding. Rather, the point-by-point observations and comments were noted, and modifications were implemented following session 3.

21. Berg, *Qualitative Research*, 362.

Analyze Results and Draw Conclusions: Triangulation

Triangulation allowed for a variety of iterative inputs to generate an optimal set of protocols for use by MNPd chaplains. Taken in its entirety, triangulation of findings occurred through the combined roles of my perspective as the project facilitator, MNPd chaplains as the internal perspective, and external chaplains as the outsider perspective. Data triangulation resulted through analysis of results from data and information gathered through each of these perspectives and points of origin.²² I examined research literature pertinent to protocols for similar chaplaincy programs, records of observations of interactions in the intervention sessions, field notes from the intervention sessions, and iterations of modification to draft protocols through session progression. The triangulated analysis, gleaned from my observations and analysis of information sources and team discussion sessions, from direct documentary evidence associated with insider contributions to development of protocols, and from outsider expert review of protocols as developed, led to a saturation point in understanding the ways that the resulting artifact (the body of protocols) are shaped.²³

Triangulation of data took place through examining and analyzing data for areas of convergence and divergence.²⁴ As the matters inherent to protocols may involve administration of care practices, selection and supervision of staffing, methods of identifying and introducing enhancements of care practices, and others, there is a need to identify areas of congruence and incongruence that emerge through development of

22. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 73.

23. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 76.

24. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197.

protocols. An interpretive assessment of the data obtained through documents from the MNPD chaplaincy program, protocols appearing in the research literature and professional practice, field notes from the collaborative sessions, and outsider expert review and reaction to draft protocols will allow for inferences from my role as facilitator to derive meaning for development of and resulting artifact of the final protocols.²⁵

25. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Evaluation of Findings

The findings of the project derived from evaluation of the protocols that were developed. These protocols themselves yielded guidelines and insights involving enhancements and innovations in chaplaincy and spiritual care activities. The protocols will offer a useful framework for addressing increasingly important matters of spiritual distress, moral injury, direct and vicarious trauma, burnout, and other phenomena. The result should provide clarity and evidence for ways to serve God's people in diverse settings where God is present and active. A key facet of the project is a humble reliance on wisdom as "the capacity to offer a synthetic discernment of knowledge on behalf of the community."¹ The applicability of these resulting protocols is intended to offer more than a mechanical demonstration of ways that counseling or therapeutics can bolster human wellness or the human condition in times of trauma or loss, although those remain important areas of work. Likewise, the intent is not to construct a framework of innovations that are simply an array of self-help methods practices as found in popular writing. Rather, the findings here are expected to yield a theologically strong examination of the means by which innovative spiritual care resources can uniquely address the

1. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 48.

distress and anxiety which are implicit in the work of the police chaplains in their varied roles in contemporary society.

Description of Results

Chaplaincy as Ministry of Presence

The concepts that emerged from discussions that resulted in shaping of protocols strongly corresponded with the description of chaplaincy as a “ministry of presence.” For the over eight hundred death notifications in the most recent year there were stark needs for police chaplains to serve as the designated agents to carry the burden of this profound and unique ministry.

Situations of Distress

These session discussions yielded rich insight into the nature of police chaplaincy that is replete with confrontation of situations of recent or ongoing danger and distress. The critical incidents which comprise much of the setting for police chaplaincy are central to understanding what is and is not meaningful in terms of innovative practices. In short, the necessity for extreme practicality and pragmatism in meeting a large volume of chaplaincy work with limited resources is an imperative deeply sensed by those working in that space.

It is not uncommon to think of police chaplaincy as spiritual first aid. This aid in many ways “adapts psychological first aid practices with a focus on spirituality and meaning making.”² This intervention in the aftermath of a crisis allows chaplains to prepare survivors and family to anticipate further reactions to an incident. Given the time

2. Julie Taylor, “Spiritual First Aid,” in *Disaster Spiritual Care*, eds. Willard Ashley and Stephen Roberts (Nashville: Skylight, 2008), 128–41; Greife, McCarroll, and Ansari, “Making Meaning,” 84.

and other constraints facing police chaplains, this first aid can become little more than triage, albeit a greatly necessary service. The ability of police chaplains to both effectively and efficiently carry out these tasks highlights the importance of professional skills and training along with a supportive resource system to bolster chaplain resilience and to strengthen and sustain the chaplaincy program.

Theological and Practical Aspects

Slippages

There were definite areas of slippage and silences within the intervention discussions. I determined that partitioning off the work of the MNPd chaplaincy program to only those areas where staff and volunteer chaplains engaged in the specific chaplaincy program assigned tasks was advisable in terms of the objective of developing protocols to assess innovative practices.

Silences

While the work of addressing chaplaincy services to address needs of police officers was overtly omitted from this project, there were occasions where the role of the chaplain coordinator transcended these roles. In those cases, the discussion and findings would regard this as an area of silence.

Another surprising area of silence involved somewhat of a reluctance to consider various innovative practices in outward-facing police chaplaincy. The very high volume of completing death notifications simply seems to consume nearly all of the time and energy of the program and its participants. Inevitably, all manner of innovation seemed to point back to ways to sustainably fulfill this task. If an innovation was going to be useful in the delivery of death notifications, it received more enthusiastic discussion. On the

other hand, the further afield an innovation may be from that task, such as arts therapy or engagement of social media, the more likely a silence was to emerge from the discussion and subsequent data.

A silence that relates to the diversity of Nashville's population seemed to permeate some of the project discussion. While the participants were highly representative of the chaplaincy program and its members, there was limited discussion on various aspects of serving diverse groups by age, race, or faith tradition. A large portion of the chaplaincy program members are from Protestant backgrounds, and many are African American. A combination of interest and willingness to volunteer for this difficult and demanding role certainly plays a part in limiting those that will be involved. This can then become a self-perpetuating situation where the work and participants of the program come to the sustaining definition of what the program's work is about and ought to be about.

Revisiting the Assumptions

The assumptions in this intervention were that MNPd chaplaincy practices were amenable to review and assessment pertaining to innovations and change. This assumption proved to largely be true and capable of successful intervention. At the same time, assumptions about a wide array of innovation practices being a welcomed and desired thing for police chaplaincy seemed to fall a bit short. Where the field of chaplaincy overall is experiencing a rich and introspective period where some practitioners are engaging in vigorous research and study, police chaplaincy may (1) remain more insulated and isolated from this wider engagement with self-study for a host of reasons, and (2) be subject to the necessities of administering high volumes of death

notifications in a large city that serve to crowd out energy to explore innovations not specifically aligned with that task.

Interpretation

The interpretation of the project findings is intended to offer insights on the interrelatedness of spirituality with whole person wellbeing for MNPD chaplains and those persons served that had experienced traumatic loss. From qualitative analysis, this project seeks to further understanding of spiritual care innovation in this essentially secular setting. The interpretation focused on ways that these data can be useful for applying protocols that assess the role and value of spiritual care resources for police chaplains. These interpretations can potentially become part of a wider and ongoing conversation with participants in the project and with a community of chaplaincy practice and research locally and across the country. This can allow the interpretation to be a dynamic and relevant set of information that can engage scholarly and practitioner interests.³ Recognizing the importance of delimiting the findings to one particular set of time, place, and circumstance, findings still have implication for wider discussion about ways that future research and application can address issues of spiritual care in nontraditional settings and in critical incidents relative to MNPD. This mixed methods design can be generalized most fully through the Principle of Empirical Interpolation and Extrapolation in light of various quantitative methodological components that can function as controlled aspects of the intervention.⁴

3. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 214.

4. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 217.

Moral Distress and Moral Injury

Moral distress and moral injury have emerged as significant constructs for phenomena in spaces in which police activity, including police chaplaincy, are engaged. While moral injury originated as a concept grounded in military settings, it increasingly is regarded as a phenomenon that “newly names the consequences of ethical harm that we experience on a personal and collective level.”⁵ The original construct established for moral injury holds that it “is present when 1) there has been a betrayal of what’s right [in the soldier’s eyes] 2) by someone who holds legitimate authority 3) in a high-stakes situation.”⁶ The evolution of the understanding of moral injury is one where one’s soul is wounded over and above what a physical, mental, or emotional reaction, however prolonged might be. Moral injury enters the space of a disturbance to oneself in regard to being somehow involved with matters of right and wrong.

Police chaplains inherently operate in settings where “wrongs” of many types occur. Throughout and following these incidents, they serve in a role that meet persons who are at points of great vulnerability. The twofold nature of moral injury can affect the chaplain and the client. Moral injury can take place when a person feels “complicit in some situation or environment that feels wrong” or when one has not done enough to prevent harm, or witnessing haunting events that linger on in one’s mind.⁷ While trauma and moral injury often occur through shared events and experiences, moral injury uniquely includes matters of regret or shame. Participants in the sessions expressed

5. Shelly Rambo, Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, and Jasmine Terry Okafor, *Trauma and Moral Injury: A Guiding Framework for Chaplains* (Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, 2020), 3.

6. Jonathon Shay, “Casualties,” *Daedalus* 140, no. 3 (2011):183.

7. Rambo, Wiinikka-Lydon, and Okafor, *Trauma*, 17.

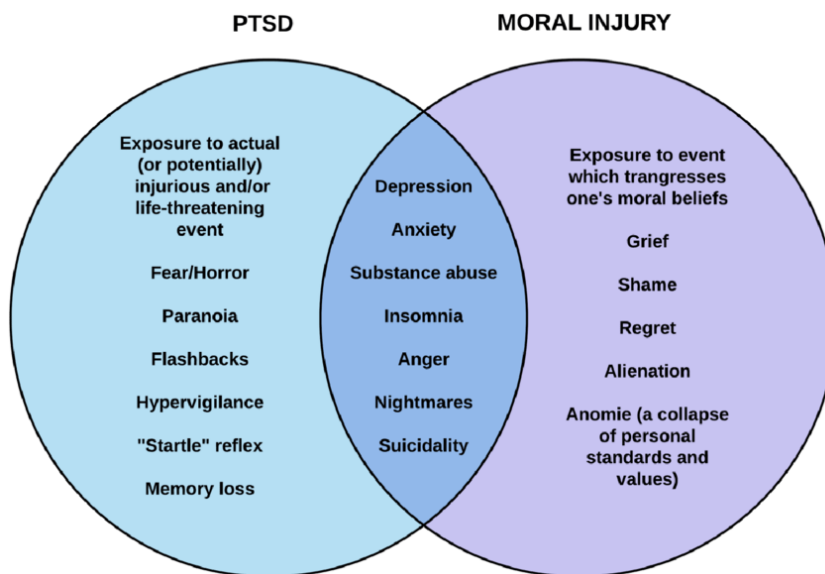
concern at their ability to readily help those receiving death notifications to obtain a sense of forgiveness. Often, individuals put a heavy and false burden of retrospective personal responsibility for accidents and violence that harmed others. The brief encounters for death notifications can at best offer few words and resources that may put those persons on a path to forgiveness. The depth of moral injury, however, is likely not so easily relieved.

The repeated exposure to results of accidents and violent events can instill moral injury in chaplains as well. More than the recurrent flashbacks from tragic situations, chaplains can experience sorrow, grief, and regret at their limited abilities. Through situations that frequently involve results from bad acts and bad actors, police chaplains can begin to question the role of society as a place for good. The volume of violence and criminal acts can take the chaplain to a point of despair that evil is more powerful than the limited work that chaplains can perform in the aftermath of tragic outcomes. The burdens remain high for the police chaplain despite continuous, diligent service.

The session discussions increasingly pointed to the somewhat narrow field within which police chaplaincy operates. Without having direct experience in the difficult work of police chaplains, they seem to imply that one cannot appreciate the level of that difficulty. For many persons, continuously delivering death notifications to complete strangers and still maintain a sense of positive outlook on society and humanity may seem an extraordinary accomplishment. Simply hearing about the routine activity of volunteer chaplains may suggest to many outsiders a rapid onset sense of powerlessness, being overwhelmed, lacking needed resources, and compelled to serve in situations where there are no good choices and where moral wrong has yielded bad outcomes.

While moral injury can occur in many varieties of institutions, occupations, and situations, it is useful to make distinctions between those in order to consider how chaplaincy fits into those spaces. While chaplaincy functions in many general ways as a “ministry of presence,” that can mean many things in different settings. This ultimately points to a conclusion on the limits to which chaplaincy can be enhanced in each of those. Considering or implementing many innovative practices in chaplaincy may be a luxury that is more available or useful for some settings than others. Not to diminish the challenges in any arena where chaplaincy is practiced, it appears that police chaplaincy experiences an exceptionally high volume of encounter with results of crime and bad acts. Similarly, moral injury can be encountered and experienced across chaplaincy settings, though the exposure to death and violence potentially places moral injury in police chaplaincy at a unique and intense level.

Figure 4. Relationship between PTSD and Moral Injury



Source: Lewis, 2020.

Confronting the Unknown

The nature of police chaplaincy entails a wide range of events and incidents whose characteristics vary extensively. The common threads of violence and accident imply that police chaplains are called upon to serve in settings where there is little predictability. Providing comfort to those that have experienced loss requires an understanding that people tend to cope with stressful situations in ways that are compelling to them. In the immediate aftermath of critical incidents, survivors and family members seek ways to preserve psychic equilibrium. The choices made in the moment are likely to be those influenced more by feeling than by thinking.⁸ The chaplain is not able to do more than be with those persons and to bear pain alongside them. The role of the chaplain not only is not to “fix” the situation, but also not to project forward to a point where suffering persons may be able to more objectively reevaluate the circumstances they have been through. In large part, those persons do not have capacity to consider fully the collective toll to their family, finances, mental state, or other considerations. Given the nature of police chaplaincy to these victims, much remains in a state of the unknown. Unlike more relational types of chaplaincy, police chaplaincy in MNPd is much more momentary and incidental by its nature. Trying to ascribe meaning to events either in the mind of the chaplain or the survivors is likely a luxury that goes unmet. As such, the burden on police chaplains can have a cumulative toll of bearing hardship with countless individuals served but rarely will those chaplains have opportunity to learn about long-term issues or recovery of those they engaged with.⁹

8. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 116–17.

9. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 116.

Just as the unknown lingers over the ongoing lives of those touched by traumatic events, so chaplains continuously confront situations where those circumstances and individuals each have their own uniqueness. While much is understood about the means of coping with trauma, there is little consensus that there are universal coping methods that are helpful for all people, purposes, and situations.¹⁰ Further, research on the evaluation of outcomes for this coping suggests that pragmatic behaviors can be optimal, though there are admittedly coping mechanisms that are more and less desirable. The need for chaplains to enter these spaces with a diversity of incidents suggests that the unknown elements may remain relatively unknown even after the fact and that responsible offerings of solace may be difficult to achieve considering the complexities of coping relative to individual differences, relationships, and overall situations.

Spirituality in Critical Incidents

A major component of police chaplaincy work is involvement with critical incidents and their aftermath. This encounter with persons in distress requires skill and compassion to ensure that those persons are engaged in ways that are respectful and supportive. Achieving this navigation can be learned but also enhanced through practical experience. A feature of human coping in the face of trauma and despair involves the “conservation of significance.”¹¹ People in times of personal or emotional danger will seek to retain that which is familiar, satisfying, and stress reducing even when those acts or mechanisms run counter to an objective assessment of what one might do or how one might best or realistically react to changed conditions of a traumatic nature.

10. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 123.

11. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 108–09.

Research suggests that the prevalence of religious coping is widespread, though highly variable.¹² Meanwhile, there is indication that religious coping may be less important for others. Yet, there is evidence that heightened levels of stress tend to lead to more engagement with religious coping where there is some existing level of spirituality or religious practice or belief present.¹³

Police chaplains are expected to possess a sense of spiritual empathy that allows them to imagine the stress that others encounter. In doing so, the chaplain enters into a space with the other person in ways that must, to the best ability of the chaplain, recognize the family, cultural, and other contexts that are the lived experiences of those persons.¹⁴ This complex encounter means that chaplains combine an array of theological and psychological knowledge with basic skills useful in human interaction.

Amid post-crisis encounters, police chaplains are called on to be judicious and circumspect in their approach, their language, and their demeanor to effectively and appropriately “meet people where they are” not only in relation to a point of tragedy or loss but in the context of all aspects of their lives. Lack of spiritual assessment opportunities can complicate the ability of police chaplains to operate from a position of informed engagement in many cases. The challenge to “get it right” in terms of delivering wise, meaningful counsel and solace to complete strangers in trauma requires a high level of desire and commitment by police chaplains to continuously enter into these settings

12. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 138.

13. Pargament, *Psychology of Religion*, 142.

14. Carrie Doeiring and Allison Kestenbaum, “Interpersonal Competencies for Cultivating Spiritual Trust,” in *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, eds. Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 145.

where their unique encounters differ markedly from chaplaincy in more relational situations and environments.

Summary of Findings

This chapter highlighted the main themes that emerged from coding content from field notes from project sessions and from shaping the protocols over an iterative process. After providing a review of the processes of data gathering, coding, and development of thematic categories, I addressed the key issues that pervaded the discussions and that serve as a key backdrop to police chaplaincy, namely moral injury and moral distress, confronting the unknown, and the role of spirituality in critical incidents. Each of these resonated with the need for and application of protocols for this ministry context. Triangulation of consideration and review of the process and resulting artifacts provided the means to critically assess the resonance of each of these to a ministry that embodies practical theology and that points to ways that chaplaincy can and does serve in increasingly numerous, challenging, and diverse ways in society. Additionally, the burden of deeply or fully understanding the burdens on ministers serving in this often-overlooked space further enhanced resonance to the importance of this project endeavor.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Interpretation: Bridging Sacred and Secular Space

The decline of participation in organized religion by a sizable portion of the population points to a need for resources that can continue to bridge sacred and secular space for those persons. This will provide opportunity for access to fulfillment of spiritual needs in times of crisis which often occur in secular or even public environments.

Trustworthiness

The project intervention process and resulting protocol can be relied on as trustworthy resources for several reasons. The applicability to the organization involved is validated through clear focus on that entity's needs and characteristics. Applicability to other police chaplaincy programs may well exist. The work is trustworthy in that it exhibits dependability whereby replication of the process would likely yield very similar outcomes within this organization and most probably quite similar outcomes in other police chaplaincy programs. Trustworthiness is obtained through credibility which is demonstrated through triangulation of data, information, and process input. Finally, the work is trustworthy insofar as my reflexivity prevented biases from intervening to alter outcomes.

An element of the trustworthiness of the project resides with the inherently trustworthiness of the participants and their role and work as chaplains. The integrity of police chaplains serving in spaces of utmost seriousness was in evidence among team

members in this project. One of the greatest attributes of chaplains is spiritual trustworthiness as they “convey respect for the unique ways people experience and name incarnational or transcendent aspects of their lives that mediate a deep sense of mystery, awe, beauty, goodness, holiness or the sacred.”¹ Through these aspects of chaplaincy, individuals entrust their spiritual lives to chaplains. The profound responsibility that chaplains bear suggests a necessary exceptional characteristic of trustworthiness that serves to imbue the project with a measure of integrity and trustworthiness.

Applicability

With a theological core of chaplaincy serving to make space for the sacred in difficult or secular settings, there is clear opportunity to apply protocols and practices that can enhance those activities. A precursor to applying innovative practices is to assess their feasibility and viability in the designated context. For the MNPd chaplaincy program, the development of formal protocols serves as a means to guide that process. The entirety of the project focused on the needs and characteristics of the MNPd chaplaincy program, resulting in a high level of applicability validated by each of the triangulation input roles. The commonalities across police chaplaincy programs suggest that there may be broad applicability of the project processes and even their outcomes. The informal nature of many police chaplaincy programs, particularly in smaller communities, may be inexperienced in applying processes and protocols such as these but, at the same time, their application may prove very important and useful in adding structure to smaller or less formal police chaplaincy programs.

1. Doebling and Kestenbaum, “Interpersonal Competencies,” 135.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent that data and methods used in the project were used in ways that reflect appropriate rigor. I maintained an organized system of data gathering, discussion structure, record keeping, and attentiveness to detail to ensure that the findings and artifacts associated with the project are dependable for the outlined purposes. Throughout the processes, a high level of transparency with participants and outsiders was maintained to ensure that the overall project was both well documented and useful for subsequent review and implementation.

Credibility

To ensure internal credibility, triangulation served as the means of evaluating information from guided discussion sessions, interpretation of discussion content was completed within field notes, and reflection interview with key participants at intervals occurred throughout the project. Informal conversation allowed for participant input to gauge any needs for redirection or alterations to intervention structure or processes.

A review of information and data generated from the intervention sessions suggests that the findings aligned with the intended purpose and objectives of the intervention. The credibility of qualitative research rests in large part on adherence to standard, accepted methodologies, as did this project. The input of outside evaluators as part of the process and data triangulation indicated that these demonstrated credibility suitable to the intended purposes.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity served as an important component in establishing the trustworthiness of this project intervention. I was relatively highly involved in all aspects of facilitating

and guiding the discussions in the intervention sessions. In order to limit bias in the process, I remained very open to the observations of participants when suggested changes in emphasis or design seemed warranted. I relied on the expertise of intervention participants and to external evaluators to a large extent in order to reduce the impact of any preconceived ideas I brought into the project design, especially as related to the nature of police chaplaincy as a field of work. I recognized my own limited background with the work of public safety chaplaincy. My training in industrial and organizational psychology and public health tended to predispose me to viewpoints that view professional endeavors as ones that lead to solutions or outcomes that are measurable and favorable as much as possible. In this regard, the predominant work of police chaplaincy in delivering death notifications on a relatively transactional basis confronted me with my biases that I came to recognize. As the sessions continued, I appreciated more fully what it meant to be a guide to a group in a chaplaincy occupational culture that was not quite what it might seem in relation to other seemingly similar chaplaincy environments. I came to appreciate that neglecting the “police” context within which this work occurred was much more salient than I had anticipated.

At each session convening, I shared with participants my synthesis of data and information from the previous sessions and sought candid input that would affirm or negate any part of my interpretation. At various intervals, suggestions and observations by participants provided clear and helpful redirection which I then incorporated in the intervention processes and artifacts. While the work of police chaplaincy occurs in secular settings, the commitment of longtime chaplains, insiders, and outsiders to the project, demonstrates how the profession of chaplaincy as ministry aligns with my own

intent to be faithful in openness to serving God in this field unimpeded by our own personal preferences or biases. Undoubtedly, my role in synthesizing data influenced certain aspects of the trajectory of the project. Even so, I sought to question myself often regarding choices I made in working with the data and returning to decisions repeatedly before their final form.

Significance and Implications

Chaplaincy as a field continues to grow and expand in new and different areas. Secular settings for chaplaincy represent a significant area in which society through institutions such as police forces rely on spiritual care as a means of meeting essential needs in society. Government-run operations have long been a mainstay of chaplaincy through the military services, prisons, emergency services such as fire and police, and hospitals.

There are already numerous services available to meet the physical, mental, and emotional needs of MNPd officers and staff. Meanwhile, there are many innovative practices emerging from research in recent years that suggest opportunities for enhancement of mature program activity. There may be limited awareness among many of the distinctive features of chaplaincy as a professional role that is not focused on evangelization or proselytization activities, but rather on provision of non-clinical spiritual centering roles to comfort persons experiencing personal distress.

The enhancement of spiritual care services assumes a likely willing and interested group of chaplains and others within MNPd that will embrace enhancement and innovation to existing practices in spiritual care services and resources. Creating a structure that assesses quantitative and qualitative measures of enhancement to the role

and value of chaplaincy activity within MNPd will be important to assessing its usefulness and to informing continuous improvement in those services.

This intervention can have potentially important outcomes for the MNPd chaplaincy program. Attention to the role of faith and work among staff and volunteer chaplains, understanding of vocation, and resilience through spiritual understanding and practice will provide those persons with unique personal resources. Stability in the “whole person” aspects of police chaplains and their lives can result in higher rates of staffing retention, better performance in roles, less reliance on clinical care, greater participation in overall wellness and wellbeing activities, and, ultimately, more successful service to the community environment overall. The spiritual lives of police chaplains will find space to be refreshed and replenished and in turn lives of those individuals and their households will reap positive results.

Sustainability

The resulting protocol artifact and its corresponding method of administration are inherently sustainable in that they are designed for ongoing, regular use in the police chaplaincy program. The very central objective of the project is to provide a means by which the MNPd chaplaincy program can continuously use the protocols to assess new proposals for innovations to chaplaincy practice. The level of detail regarding the origins, design, and resulting instrument and administrative methodology should provide confidence to MNPd and potentially to other police chaplaincy programs to incorporate these protocols on a regular basis in their work.

Sustainability for the volume of work associated with police chaplaincy rests partly on the training available as the environment for this ministry grows more complex,

diverse, and challenging. Police chaplaincy overall somewhat sporadically relies on clinical pastoral education (CPE) as a requirement or investment in its work. The MNPd chaplaincy coordinator expressed interest in CPE as a valued resource for police chaplains. ACPE, a provider of CPE, for instance, has developed online training modules that are used for public safety and related fields. The lack of CPE environments that are outside of healthcare settings still are rather limited, which may also limit interest in or support for CPE training for police chaplains. Meanwhile, considerable customized training through ICPC and other public safety providers is offered. These may both offer a positive resource that enhances the sustainability of the protocols from this project within MNPd and as a means for wider dissemination of the protocols.

Personal Significance

I found the process of guiding group discussion for a purposeful objective in the field of police chaplaincy highly rewarding and educational. The project provided me with many opportunities to grow in knowledge from those with lengthy firsthand experience. I have long held interest in the field of chaplaincy in various settings but came as rather more of a novice to police chaplaincy. I appreciated greatly the gracious spirit which police chaplains extended in opening themselves to a process they entered into uncertain of its ultimate value to them. I pray that it has delivered a meaningful and useful tool for the MNPd program as well as for others.

I initially did not fully recognize the many and important ways that police chaplaincy differs from some other forms of chaplaincy. The intensity of work that is involved became clearer as we continued in the project. Also, the concept of practical theology came to have a whole new meaning for me in guiding this project. While

chaplains are anchored deeply in their theological training and their own faith communities, the practice of police chaplaincy is not one that has the luxury of time and resource for the profundities of theological issues and questions. Rather, police chaplains are ministers in the sincerest form of that term as they meet people in deep turmoil and as they strive to be a bridging agent to show God's presence in incredibly challenging times and places.

I have felt enriched in the experiences of this project in other ways that I had not anticipated. I appreciate far more the distinction between relational and incidental or transactional chaplaincy roles. My desire to guide process and potential opportunities for outcome evaluation in this setting have been informed in new ways by the limitations that exist in the fast pace of police chaplaincy and the predominance of a few tasks of high volume that comprise that work.

Theological Significance

The theological significance of this project is that it points to the unique, perhaps overlooked, ministry role of police chaplaincy. In a society that is vexed with violence and tragedy in so many ways, police chaplains day in and day out are striving to show God's love to people caught up in the pain of those situations. Surveying the religious ecosystem of a community may often neglect the immense role as spiritual caregivers that police chaplains represent. Volunteers devote hundreds of hours of their time each year to offer service in the most painful settings imaginable. The sacrifice of police chaplains to be available to strangers in deep trauma at any time of day or night demonstrates a remarkable display of God's love at work. The work of ministry for those

in trauma is a calling that requires great commitment to service but also great love of God to provide this honorable, often thankless and unnoticed service.

Practical theology is at the center of police chaplaincy work. This area of ministry deals with human suffering in some of its most raw stages. Chaplains minister to persons in their pain when the most basic of theological questions are likely to arise: “Why has this happened?”, “What could I or should I have done differently?”, “Am I to blame for this?” and certainly “Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?” While the answers or speculations on these questions are many and varied, chaplains must feel sufficiently equipped to offer comfort and response even where comfort may be difficult and no response may be available, fulfilling, or accepted. Often, issues of forgiveness arise among survivors and their guilt, whether reasonable or not. Chaplains here too provide a ministry that offers a theologically informed, shaped, and guided way to express God’s love and forgiveness to persons in trauma. Above all, the practical theology of chaplains provides the “first aid” that can offer strength to those in trauma toward a road to renewed wholeness. Chaplaincy as a practical ministry of presence may sometimes lack words but can convey empathy that emulates the sayings sometimes attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, “Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary,” and “The deed you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today.”

Opportunity for Further Research

The opportunity to report findings back to MNPd is a foremost objective of the project. Future implementation of these protocols in this and potentially other settings may provide further reporting opportunities.

There are several areas where research around practices of police chaplaincy merits attention. One that may benefit police chaplaincy practice and outcomes involves use of spiritual assessment tools to gauge clients' situation prior to and throughout chaplaincy encounters. Fitchett notes that even clinical pastoral education (CPE) experiences have not extensively employed spiritual assessment as a tool, thus diminishing opportunities for this diagnostic to better inform chaplains about persons that they serve.² Further, Fitchett stresses, "The emphasis on the importance of assessment is rooted in the conviction that revelation about the divine nature and foundation of existence is continuing and that it proceeds through persons."³

Further examination of outcomes of police chaplaincy encounters also represents a worthy area of exploration. As noted in reference to chaplaincy in healthcare settings, outcomes research is important to demonstrate the value of chaplaincy to organizations, to avoid marginalization of chaplaincy work, and to help ensure that chaplaincy activities are leading to the effects which are intended.⁴

Conclusion

Creating a protocol for innovation is a challenging but useful and important matter in a field as useful and important as police chaplaincy. Assembling chaplaincy practitioners to forge a new direction that helps those persons accomplish their objectives more effectively and meaningfully is a worthy endeavor. I pray that this project will serve the MNPd chaplaincy program well and will be an encouragement and help to other

2. George Fitchett, *Assessing Spiritual Needs: A Guide for Caregivers* (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 2002), 15.

3. Fitchett, *Assessing*, 23.

4. George Fitchett. *Case Studies in Spiritual Care: Healthcare Chaplaincy Assessments, Interventions, & Outcomes* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), 260.

police chaplaincy programs to undertake similar efforts that allow them to glorify God as ministers to persons in need.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval: IRB Exemption Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Doctor of Ministry Office ACU Box 29405 Abilene, Texas 79699
www.acu.edu/dmin 325-674-3732



January 18, 2023

Dear Garrett Harper,

On behalf of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Protocols for Enhancing the Role and Value of Spiritual Care Resources in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department" is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects as:

☒ Non-Research because the "activity does not involve a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge [45 CFR 46.102(d)]."

☐ Non-Human Research because the "research does not involve obtaining information about living individuals [45 CFR 46.102(f)]."

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit your application to the DMin office so a determination can be made about whether the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading 'Carson Reed'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Carson' and last name 'Reed' clearly distinguishable.

Dr. Carson Reed
Dean, Graduate School of Theology
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

APPENDIX B

Solicitation Letter

Hello,

I am doing a research study entitled “Protocols for Enhancing the Role and Value of Spiritual Care Resources in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department”. The purpose of the study is to develop protocols that guide and inform how chaplaincy and spiritual care resources can more fully serve spiritual needs and interests in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department for its personnel and for those impacted by police activity. To qualify to participate, you must be a staff or volunteer chaplain currently or previously with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. Participation would require about 4 hours of your time to participate in guided group discussions including other MNPd chaplains.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at gdh21a@acu.edu and you will be presented a Consent Form via return email with more info.

Sincerely,

Garrett Harper
Primary Investigator

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in this ministry intervention project. This form describes the project and what will be asked of you today. Please read over it carefully and let me know if you have any questions.

What is this project doing?

The ministry intervention project is seeking to develop protocols that guide and inform how chaplaincy and spiritual care resources can more fully serve spiritual needs and interests in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department for its personnel and for those impacted by police activity.

What would I do if I participate?

The ministry intervention project will include four guided discussions on four dates throughout 2023. These sessions will be arranged and hosted by Chaplain Ivey at MNPDP facilities or other locations convenient for the group. Each session will last between 60 and 90 minutes. Participants will include current and past staff and volunteer chaplains with MNPDP. During each session, you will meet with the project leader and a small group of chaplains to discuss and reflect on a series of chaplaincy practices. The project leader will guide the sessions and review materials in preparation and follow up for each session. Sessions will not be recorded.

How will I benefit from participating?

There is not any compensation for participating in this ministry intervention project, but you may have the opportunity to grow in your thoughts and insights about chaplaincy through these group discussions. I hope that you will find value in discussing innovative practices in chaplaincy as a way to contribute to the overall work of the MNPDP chaplaincy program.

Are there any risks in participating?

I don't expect you to encounter any risks in relation to this project. The project leader and Abilene Christian University do not have any plan to pay for any injuries or problems you may experience as a result of your participation in this project.

Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?

Yes, absolutely. Your participation is completely voluntary. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you can ask to leave the session. Dr. Tim Sensing at Abilene Christian University and the Internal Review Board have reviewed the process and think you can

participate comfortably. During the sessions, you can choose to not participate in any portion that you do not feel comfortable with. You are free to leave at any time you wish. Participating is your choice. However, we do appreciate any help you are able to provide.

How long will participation take?

The ministry intervention project will take place over four sessions throughout 2023. Sessions will be scheduled in conjunction with Chaplain Ivey at MNPD at locations and times convenient for the largest number of participants. Each session will last between 60 and 90 minutes.

How are you protecting privacy?

Your name will not be linked to any specific document or information associated with this project. There will be no recording of the sessions. All information obtained in the guided discussions will be considered as product of the group and will not in any way be associated or identifiable with individual participants.

I have some questions about the study. Who can I ask?

You may ask any questions that you have at any time. However, if you have additional questions or concerns in the future, you may contact the project leader of this study. The project leader is Garrett Harper, and he may be contacted at (615)419-5905, gdh21a@acu.edu, P.O. Box 270, Kingston Springs, TN 37082.

If you are unable to reach the project leader or wish to speak to someone other than the project leader, you may contact Dr. Carson Reed, Dean of Graduate School of Theology, Abilene Christian University, Onstead-Packer Biblical Studies Building (BSB) 299, Abilene, TX 79601, (325) 674-3732, cerl2a@acu.edu

The ministry intervention project is being supervised by Dr. Tim Sensing from the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University. If you have questions, you can call him at 325-674-3792 or email him at tim.sensing@acu.edu.

ACU also has a board to protect the rights of people who participate in ministry intervention projects. You can ask them questions at 325-674-2885. You can also mail questions to Dr. Megan Roth, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, TX 79699-90103 or send an email to orosp@acu.edu or megan.roth@acu.edu.

Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____

APPENDIX D

Team Discussion Session Questions

Session One

Discussion Prompts for Team Review on Topics of Enhancements to Spiritual Care Resources

1. What are criteria or requirements for adopting or rejecting enhancements to spiritual care resources?
2. What is inspiring or exciting (or not) about enhancing spiritual care resources?
3. What are ways that the use of social media can enhance chaplaincy and spiritual care practices?
4. What are ways that arts therapy can enhance chaplaincy and spiritual care practices?
5. What are ways that tele-chaplaincy models can enhance spiritual care practices?
6. What are ways that celebration and resilience activities can enhance spiritual care practices?
7. What are ways that use of therapy animals can enhance spiritual care practices?
8. What are ways that community engagement activities by chaplains can enhance spiritual care practices?
9. What models of or approaches to community chaplaincy training that could enhance spiritual care practices?
10. What are various ways and means of staffing community chaplaincy that can enhance spiritual care practices?

Session Two

Discussion Prompts for Team Review of Categories and Ideas Developed in Session One related to Spiritual Care Resources

1. On reflection of the categories developed from session one and presented in session two, what are any theological or practical considerations that may apply to each of those?
2. Which of the categories interest and excite you the most, and why? Which the least, and why?
3. What themes or concepts seem to emerge or resonate across the categories?
4. What suggestions do you have for formulation of practices related to these themes, concepts, and considerations?

Session Three

Discussion Prompts for Team Review of Draft Protocols Developed from Analysis of Session Two Results

1. On review of the draft protocols shared with the team and shared in session three, which areas seem strongest and weakest, most and least needed or relevant, and why?
2. What should be added or removed, expanded, or shortened, in the draft protocols, and why?
3. What aspects of delivering chaplaincy and spiritual care resources seem to resonate with aspects of the draft protocols?

Session Four

Discussion Prompts for Team Review of Draft Protocols Developed from Analysis of Session Three Results

1. On review of the final draft protocols, what impressions do you have about the feasibility of implementing these protocols in the future?
2. What final suggestions or changes do you recommend for the protocols, and why?

APPENDIX E

Outside Expert Questions

Based on review of the draft protocols for enhancing spiritual care resources in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, please note your general and any specific responses to the following prompts.

1. Overall, how do you perceive the content of protocols as a framework for enhancing chaplaincy and spiritual care resources? Please note any specific examples that support these perceptions.
2. Overall, how applicable are the protocols to the goal of enhancing chaplaincy and spiritual care resources?
3. Overall, how flexible are the protocols to the goal of enhancing chaplaincy and spiritual care resources?
4. Overall, how appropriate are the protocols to the goal of enhancing chaplaincy and spiritual care resources?
5. What suggestions would you make for any modifications, additions, or deletions of the draft protocols? Please note specific examples and the rationale for the suggestion.

APPENDIX F

Field Note Protocols

Date:

Time:

Session #:

Notes	Researcher Comment	Themes

APPENDIX G

ARTIFACT: Protocols for Assessing Innovative Practices

These protocols are intended for the Metropolitan Police Department of Nashville-Davidson County to use in relation to assessing new practices and innovations for consideration in the chaplaincy program. They can be used as a set of process guidelines to assist in making thoughtful decisions that are guided by the practicalities of carrying out chaplaincy tasks and duties and the theological foundations that provide the rationale for chaplaincy as a unique and important service.

Following are descriptions of the means and methods for conducting the assessment using the accompanying instrument. These means and methods and the instrument were developed through a series of guided discussions that included staff and volunteer chaplains in the MNPDP program.

STEP ONE

- A. The assessment instrument is to be completed by a group of five persons. These will include the chaplain coordinator for MNPDP, two additional MNPDP staff chaplains, and two MNPDP volunteer chaplains. The volunteer chaplains are selected by the chaplain coordinator based on a blend of longevity and experience with the chaplaincy program. The five persons will be trained in the use of the assessment process and instrument by the chaplain coordinator or by an individual that he selects.
- B. Proposed practices and innovations may be submitted to the chaplain coordinator at any time. These may be submitted by any staff chaplain or any volunteer chaplain. The chaplain coordinator will announce the opportunity for submitting proposals periodically at MNPDP chaplaincy program events, trainings, and through other program communications.

The submission requires a clear statement of what the proposed practice is designed to accomplish and what activities it entails. Sufficient description is required for adequate understanding of those completing the assessment. Ancillary, supporting documentation may be included as needed and helpful. This may include any information about costs, technology, training, or other features which relate to a proposed practice.

STEP TWO

- C. The group of five persons will each complete the instrument individually and separately. Upon completion, the chaplain coordinator will compile the results with equal weighting of final scores and recommendations from each of the five respondents.
- D. If the score totals result in a recommendation to proceed, the chaplain coordinator will take additional steps to determine any cost/benefit aspects that are specific to implementing the practice. The results of this portion of the assessment will be used in conjunction with the scored totals to determine whether full recommendation, partial or pilot recommendation, delayed recommendation, or no recommendation is made to proceed with the practice.

STEP THREE

- E. The chaplain coordinator, upon final completion of the assessment instruments and scoring along with any accompanying cost/benefit data, will compile results and recommendations at least biannually or more frequently if deemed useful. Those practices that are recommended and receive favorable support for full, partial or pilot, or delayed introduction will be reported out at periodic gatherings of volunteer chaplains for training and recognition.
- F. Persons submitting a proposal may contact the chaplain coordinator for follow-up information as desired. At that time, information about assessment, recommendations, or any needed modification or additional information regarding the proposal can be discussed with the chaplain coordinator.

STEP FOUR

- G. As practices are implemented, the chaplain coordinator may use the assessment processes to determine their effectiveness and alignment with practical and theological aspects of chaplaincy. The process may also be used to assess options of modifying a practice, expanding a practice from partial or pilot status, or expanding or combining various types of practices.

APPENDIX H

Instruments

Instrument for Assessing Innovative Practices & Enhancements in MNPD Volunteer Chaplaincy Program

Title of proposed practice or enhancement

Description of proposed practice or enhancement

Rank each of the items in the following tables as shown.

0 No Benefit to This

1 Some Benefit to This

2 Significant Benefit to This

ROLE OF CHAPLAINCY

How does the proposed practice address or enhance the role of chaplaincy with regard to

Practical & Theological Aspects				
	0	1	2	Sum
Comfort				
Provide comfort to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Meet Crisis				
Provide service at the time and place of need				
Resource				
Provide skilled service and resources corresponding to the crisis, distress or need				
Relief				
Provide solace or tangible assistance to persons in difficult and traumatic situations				
Outreach				
Provide proactive engagement with persons in need				
Pastoral				
Display and convey appropriate spiritual care and resources for those in need				
Sense of forgiveness				
Provide care that addresses feelings of guilt or shame in persons related to traumatic or difficult situations				
		Sum Total		

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHAPLAINCY

How does the proposed practice address or enhance the characteristics of chaplaincy with regard to

Practical & Theological Aspects				
	0	1	2	Sum
Calm				
Establish or expand a sense of calm for those in crisis, distress, or need				
Available				
Offer services that are highly accessible by persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Trust				
Foster a sense of trust in services provided to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Support				
Provide high level of tangible or intangible support to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Sharing				
Foster a sense of sharing and being with persons in their time of crisis, distress or need				
Trained				
Offer a service that exhibits training appropriate to persons with varied types of crisis, distress, or need				
		Sum Total		

CONSTRAINTS OF CHAPLAINCY

How does the proposed practice address or enhance the constraints of chaplaincy with regard to

Practical & Theological Aspects				
	0	1	2	Sum
Time				
Optimize time to the benefit of chaplains and to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Technical				
Optimize technical systems and tools to provide service to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Distance				
Optimize distance to the benefit of chaplains and to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Financial				
Optimize financial resources to the benefit of chaplains and to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Training				
Optimize training to provide service to the benefit of persons in varied types of crisis, distress, or need				
		Sum Total		

CHALLENGES OF CHAPLAINCY

How does the proposed practice address or enhance the challenges of chaplaincy with regard to

Practical & Theological Aspects				
	0	1	2	Sum
Health/ safety				
Ensure the health and safety of chaplains and persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Trauma				
Provide service and resource to chaplains and their own experience of secondary, vicarious, and other trauma				
Helplessness				
Provide service and resource to chaplains in serving their own and others' sense of helplessness in various situations				
The unknown				
Provide service and resource to chaplains in serving their own and others' understanding of and ability to address 'the unknown' in various situations and circumstances.				
Generational				
Foster abilities of chaplains to meet multigenerational needs for persons in crisis or distress				
Complication				
Foster ways to minimize complication in delivering chaplaincy services to persons in crisis, distress, or need				
Language				
Foster abilities of chaplains to meet varieties of language needs for persons in crisis or distress				
		Sum Total		

Qualitative Summary

Qualitative results reflecting enhancement to practical and theological aspects of chaplaincy

Not recommended	<u>0</u> to <u>7</u>	Sum of all Sum Totals _____
Slight recommendation	<u>8</u> to <u>16</u>	
Moderate recommendation	<u>17</u> to <u>23</u>	
Strong recommendation	<u>25</u> to <u>32</u>	

Quantitative Summary

Are there any special considerations or contingencies involved with this proposed practice? If so, what are those?

What, if any, financial considerations may be involved with the proposed practice?

ANTICIPATED COSTS TO IMPLEMENT _____

ANTICIPATED FINANCIAL BENEFITS _____

NET COST/ BENEFIT RESULT _____

What, if any, liabilities for MNPD may be involved with the proposed practice?

Quantitative results reflecting special considerations and cost/ benefit of proposed practice

Not recommended	___	Comments _____
Slight recommendation	___	Comments _____
Moderate recommendation	___	Comments _____
Strong recommendation	___	Comments _____

BRIEF VITA

Garrett Harper was born in Nürnberg, Germany on July 28, 1960. He has lived in the Nashville, Tennessee area for much of his life. He received the following degrees: Doctor of Philosophy (University of Southern Mississippi), Juris Doctor (Nashville School of Law), Master of Public Health (University of Tennessee), Master of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (Austin Peay State University), Master of Theological Studies (Lipscomb University), Master of Business Administration (Kennesaw State University), Master of Agriculture and Natural Resources (University of Tennessee-Martin), and Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (Penn State University). He has completed additional graduate coursework at Endicott College and Middle Tennessee State University. He currently works for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County as a Research and Strategy Analyst. He teaches at Trevecca Nazarene University in the Skinner School of Business in the graduate areas of economics, data analytics, and public health. He worked in various organizational research roles in the past and is a Certified Community Researcher. He has published studies of the Nashville music industry, healthcare industry, and workforce dynamics across Tennessee. He is completing his fourth unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. Currently, Garrett resides in Kingston Springs, Tennessee.