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**LET THE CORPORATION SAY AMEN?: ROLE DEFINITION AND  
NEGOTIATION OF CHAPLAINS IN CORPORATE AMERICA**

A Thesis in

Sociology

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to define the role of chaplains in the workplace and explore the process through which they have been integrated into corporate life. To define their role and explore the process of their integration, 21 in-depth interviews of corporate chaplains were conducted and supplemented with non-technical literature, or archival data, collected from a nonprofit organization that serves as a national corporate chaplain provider. The grounded theory approach was used in the analysis of this data, allowing for a comprehensive discussion of corporate chaplaincy, as it exists in the United States of America. As such, the presentation of analytic results included in this paper is ordered to provide a description of corporate chaplaincy and the environment in which corporate chaplains work, discuss the barriers and constraints experienced by chaplains as they attempt to fulfill their responsibilities and daily activities, and highlight the formation of a collective identity through a single unified goal.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
Chapter 1 Background .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Literature Review .....	3
Brief History of Chaplaincy .....	3
Corporate Chaplaincy and Religion in Corporate America .....	5
Research on Chaplaincy .....	8
Basic Theoretical Orientation.....	12
Chapter 2 Methods .....	15
Primary Data Source.....	15
Data Collection.....	15
Interviews.....	15
Sample.....	16
Non-technical Literature .....	18
Analytic Procedure .....	19
Chapter 3 Analysis .....	21
The Praying Field .....	21
Survey of the Land.....	23
Chaplains: Who are they? .....	23
“The Twenty-One Services” .....	28
Complex Extended Worksite.....	34
Establishing Presence.....	37
The Initiation .....	38
The Paper Trail .....	40
To “Be There” .....	41
Raising A Standard .....	44
Primary Barriers to Service .....	48
Physical Environment .....	48
Negative Client Response .....	53
A Single Unified Goal .....	58
Chapter 4 Conclusion .....	62
Summary of Analysis.....	62
Suggestions for Future Research .....	65
Bibliography.....	67

Appendix A Interview Questions Used For Probing Participants.....	71
Appendix B List of Analyzed Non-technical Literature (i.e. Archival Data).....	74

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# Chapter 1

## Background

### Introduction

It is no secret that the psychological impact of tragedy, trauma, and the stresses of everyday life events is known to negatively affect work potential and performance (efficiency, productivity, and accuracy), especially when suppressed and left unattended. In response to this potential threat to daily production, corporations have adopted more diverse employee benefits packages that not only include health care services to aid in the physical wellbeing of employees, but also services to aid in their mental and spiritual wellbeing. Corporate chaplain<sup>1</sup> care services, made accessible to all employees and their immediate families, are increasingly more present among the services included in these diversified employee benefits packages, yet very little is known concerning the role and function of chaplains in corporate America. Likewise, nothing is known of the integration process of corporate chaplaincy into the workplace, in which the chaplain establishes him/herself within the boundaries of the corporate workplace in a manner that does not infringe upon personal freedoms associated with privacy and religious identity and affiliation.

In fact, what we do know about corporate chaplaincy today is limited to its coverage in popular business and religious based editorials (i.e. *Business Week*, *The*

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as “business chaplain” and “industrial chaplains.”

*Economist, Forbes, Fortune, Christianity Today, and Faith at Work*), which only serve to report on the increasing employment of corporate chaplains around the nation- in firms both large and small, offer testimonials from corporate clients and their employees, and either applaud or admonish corporate executives for introducing corporate chaplaincy into their workplace. It is, therefore, the objective of this research project to provide what Geertz (1973) termed a “thick description” of corporate chaplaincy and the process through which chaplains have been integrated into corporate life. Through the collection and analysis of multiple data points and sources, a “thick description” is expected to offer a “detailed, context-sensitive” picture of the work life and experience of corporate chaplains (Emerson et. al. 1995). Likewise, in the absence of empirical research on corporate chaplaincy, a “thick description” offers the additional benefit of a data rich analysis to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the integration process of chaplains into the corporate work environment.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the research methodology, results of analysis, and concluding contributions of this study, the current chapter seeks to provide background to the birth and growth of corporate chaplaincy in the United States and identify the placement of this project within the literary body of social research, to which it is expected to contribute. To provide background to the birth and growth of corporate chaplaincy and the placement of its discussion in social research, this chapter 1) offers a brief history of chaplaincy and its introduction the United States, 2) discusses the presence chaplains and varied forms of religion in the workplace 3) reviews past research on chaplaincy, and 4) outlines the social theory that informed the orientation of this research.



## Literature Review

### *Brief History of Chaplaincy*

The integration of chaplains into the workplace, or work environment, is no new concept. In fact, chaplains were first integrated in the biblical recordings of Moses, circa 1400 BC in the book of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, the chaplain (or priest) was expected to bring tidings of comfort, encouragement, and confidence to the Israeli soldiers as the time for battle drew near:

And it shall come to pass, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, <sup>3</sup>And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; <sup>4</sup>For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you against your enemies, to save you. (Deuteronomy 20:2-4, KJV)

Acknowledging the soldiers' fear of potential defeat, the chaplain in this passage responded with a message that admonished the soldiers against their fears and promised victory by the strength and salvation of a greater being: "the Lord [their] God." Thus, being immortalized in written history, this chaplain became a historical figure that has been emulated for centuries for the provision of care to individuals in distress, despair, and/or danger of death.

The British military forces were among those who emulated this historical figure of chaplaincy. However, they not only adopted chaplaincy into their military work environment, they organized chaplain services into a formal profession. By 1791, the "institutional and organizational structure [of chaplaincy] in the British military forces"

was introduced to the United States as a prototype, through the United States military (Thompson 1978, p xi). Consequently, this prototype's introduction ushered in the formal inclusion of the chaplain position into the United States military. With this formal position, chaplain services eventually extended beyond praying and speaking words of encouragement on the battlefield. Their services included officiating weddings, funerals, and baptisms; operating the military school system; conducting Sunday services, weekly prayer meets, and ethical lectures; visiting prisoners in guard houses, soldiers in barracks, and sick individuals in the hospitals; and coordinating activities and domestic tasks to suppress the "shady amusements" (e.g. gambling, profanity, and excessive drinking) of the soldiers (Norton 1977). Additionally, upon establishing new military bases and conquering new territories, the role of chaplains also included missionary ventures for the conversion of native residents.

General knowledge of the history of military chaplaincy is absolutely necessary in the discussion of chaplaincy today. This general knowledge is particularly important because the establishment of chaplaincy in the United States military predates the recorded appearance of chaplains, both formally and informally trained, beyond the walls of the church. As a precursor, military chaplaincy introduced a model for the integration of chaplaincy into the workplace, or work environment<sup>2</sup>. Since chaplaincy's formal introduction in the United States military in 1791, chaplains have most commonly served in hospitals and hospice programs, jails and prisons, and educational institutions for the

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<sup>2</sup> As later discussed in the analysis section of this paper, this is especially true in the case of corporate chaplaincy. To say the least, it was clearly stated that the role of corporate chaplains was modeled precisely after the role specifications of military chaplains.

rehabilitation, guidance, and moral and spiritual counseling of patients, inmates and students of all ages. Chaplains have even worked through such organizations as the Association of Interfaith Animal Chaplains and the Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement, to service animal owners and enthusiasts who are grievous or worrisome from the loss, injury or malnutrition of an animal, or pet. However, from chaplaincy's introduction to the United States and subsequent expansion until the early 1980s, the integration of chaplains into the workplace was largely confined to governmental institutions, social service providers, and non-profit organizations<sup>3</sup>.

### ***Corporate Chaplaincy and Religion in Corporate America***

It was nearly two centuries after chaplaincy's first formal introduction to the United States in 1791 that chaplaincy was introduced to for-profit organizations, or corporations, in the form of *corporate chaplains* in the early 1980s. Since the introduction of corporate chaplaincy in the early 1980s, the demand for chaplains in corporate offices and work facilities grew quickly and was reported to have "intensified," following the tragedies of September 11, 2001 and "increased downsizing and corporate belt-tightening" (Coolidge 2002). As a result, it is believed that the demand for chaplains in corporate offices and work facilities has grown to exceed current supply (*The Economist*, Aug 2007). In 2005, *U.S. News and World Report* estimated that

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<sup>3</sup> Understand, however, that even with this long history of integration between religion and state, and religion and public service, the establishment and further justification of chaplaincy in these environments was not without conflict and negotiation (See Stover 1977 for further discussion and example).

approximately “4,000 chaplains [were] tending employee flocks nationwide”- a number that is only expected to have increased over the last three years (January 2005).

At this point, however, it would be a mistake to assume that chaplaincy’s introduction to corporations in the early 1980s was religion’s first interaction with the corporate office. While the date of religion’s first introduction to the corporate office remains undetermined, “family owned and privately held companies”- like Blitex, Chick-fil-A, and Tires Plus- have long been identified as “faith-friendly,” and do foster a faith-friendly work environment (Miller 2007, p 112-113). In such faith-friendly environments, executives have been known to host bible studies before or after operation hours and allow employees to assemble for prayer and bible study during lunch. They have also been known to provide “serenity rooms” for daily use and distribute calendars and information sheets on various religious holidays, among other such activities (*The Economist*, Aug 2007). Yet, there is a distinct difference between incorporating these acts of “faith-friendliness” and incorporating chaplaincy into the corporate workplace.

The difference between incorporating acts of “faith-friendliness” and incorporating chaplaincy rests on the issue of corporate sanctioned religion-work integration for the improvement of the corporate work environment versus corporate sponsored religion-work integration for the individual care of corporate employees. Creating a faith-friendly work environment requires changing the culture of business within a given corporation to encourage employee comfort with religious expression in the workplace and promote religious tolerance (and awareness) through education programs and interfaith activities. Since it is the responsibility of all organizational members to contribute to the shaping of a more supportive business culture, permission to

implement programs and spearhead activities is not limited to management, or a few selected individuals. On the contrary, hiring and/or contracting in chaplains for the mental and spiritual benefit of individual employees require no collective support or responsibility. Chaplaincy is introduced into the corporate work environment by management, at some risk of being religion specific, and lower level employees are instrumental in the integration of religion in the workplace only to the extent of their voluntary acceptance of chaplain services.

Unlike chaplaincy's previous integration in governmental and non-profit social service organizations as both a comfort in crisis and counsel in mental and spiritual rehabilitation, the purpose and form of chaplaincy in corporate life remains relatively unknown and unclear. Since Marx and Engel's discussion in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) of an inevitable revolution against capitalism and the practices of corporate merchants to increase profits and privatization of property, the illustration of corporate activity has been marred with stories of exploitation and disenfranchisement by corporate executives (the bourgeois) of their less fortunate and individually powerless laborers (the proletariat). These corporate practices to increase profits were then improved through Taylor's (1916) scientific management of human labor, whereby the manager's responsibility was (and still is) to calculate the productivity of the strongest and most productive employee and devise a plan to not only ensure the same level of productivity from all other employed individuals, but also improve it through such methods as reorganizing the physical layout of corporate work facilities and creating competition among the laborers by offering incentives for stellar performances of increased productivity.

Under Taylor's (1916) system of scientific management, human work potential is considered calculable and man is to remain unaffected by the distractions of physical, mental, and spiritual injury or distress. In essence, men are living machines, expected to work at optimum efficiency and productivity at all times. Indeed, conditions within the corporate work environment have improved through employee rebellions (i.e. protests, strikes and other demonstrations and work disturbances) and union activities. However, remnants of this system still exist in managerial practices and education programs today, maintaining a corporate culture that stands in stark contrast to the traditionally altruistic nature of religion and committed spiritual care of chaplains to aid all those in need. What role, then, does the presence of chaplaincy have in the 'bottom line' driven corporate work environment, and how has the chaplain's role been negotiated in the process of its integration into the workplace?

### ***Research on Chaplaincy***

The literary discussion of chaplaincy is largely limited to personal journals, diaries, and memoirs (e.g. Sheeran 1960); encyclopedias and chronologies (e.g. Woodworth 2001); and editorials (e.g. Sachtleben, 1978). However, within the past two decades, there has been an increase in the number of empirical studies that explore the benefits and concerns associated with the presence of chaplains and the inclusion of chaplain care, pastoral care, and religious programming in hospitals and other medical centers, various branches of the United States military, and jails and prisons. The leading foci of these studies are centered on three primary issues: 1) the recognition of chaplains

as specialists in the provision of spiritual care and consultation and the increasing need for their service, 2) challenges encountered in their individual work environments, and 3) important requisites in the socialization and acclimation of chaplains into their work environment. A review of the findings on these three main research topics is respectively presented below to provide background to the current state of research on chaplaincy.

It is reported that nearly 50 percent of hospital inpatients desire to have prayer with their physicians, not accounting for their additional desire to pray with nurses and visitors (King & Brushwick 1994, Post et. al. 2000). While the reliability of these reports are questionable, the questions of professional boundaries, competency, and ethics surrounding the issue of patient-physician prayer and spirituality are important to consider in understanding the importance of chaplains on the healthcare team of hospitals and other health care facilities. Post et. al. (2000) cautions medical personnel to avoid taking on the role of spiritual counselor, as not to compromise the professional boundary between them and their patients and/or risk the appearance of coercion. Aside from concerns about the relational boundaries between medical personnel and patients in providing spiritual assistance to patients, Kristeller et. al. (1999) found that, even after accepting the responsibility of addressing the spiritual needs of patients, oncologists and oncology nurses were more likely to **under**-address spiritual distress. This increased likelihood of **under**-addressing the spiritual needs of their patients resulted from “time constraints, lack of confidence in [their potential] effectiveness,” and their uncertainty about their role as a spiritual aid (Kristeller et. al. 1999, p 451, similar results in Kuuppelomaki, 2001). As a consequence, 85 percent of these doctors and nurses felt that it would more ideal for a chaplain to address issue of spirituality with their cancer

patients. The role of the physician, as proposed by Handazo & Koenig (2004) is only to “assess the spiritual needs [of the patient] as they relate to healthcare” and refer them to a chaplain, or “professional pastoral caregiver” (p 1242). It is then the role of the chaplain to act as “spiritual care specialist on the healthcare team” to address those needs (Handazo & Koenig 2004, p 1242).

As the “spiritual care specialist on the health care team” (Handazo & Koenig 2004, p 1242), chaplains not only pray for and console patients and their family members upon request, but are also instrumental in helping “patients, families and caregivers identify the underlying values that influence their decisions” (Simmonds 1994, p103) on bioethical dilemmas such as physician assisted suicide (PAS) (Carlson et. al. 2005), resuscitation status and feeding tube replacement (King & Wells 2003). As such, the role of chaplain encompasses both traditional and nontraditional roles (Sharp 1991), which requires effective collaboration with all other members of the healthcare team for the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Collaboration between chaplain and other healthcare professionals were often reported to stall or break down by conflict<sup>4</sup> - whether the health care professionals were doctors in hospitals (Sharp 1991, Norwood 2006) or psychologists in the air force (Budd 1999). Even the oncologists in the piece written by Kristeller et. al. (1999), who were in favor of the chaplain’s service on the healthcare team, reported that they “would not confer with chaplains” on the diagnosis and treatment of patients (p 451). This conflict between chaplain and medical specialist were found to

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<sup>4</sup> A similar conflict was reported to occur within the prison between chaplains and the correctional officers, in which correctional officers were more likely to endorse punishment and custody versus rehabilitation and support (Sundt & Cullen 2002).



result from the 1) chaplain's ignorance of medical jargon and 2) ignorance and lack of respect of medical personnel for the spiritual expertise of chaplains.

The number one resolution to the conflict between chaplain and other healthcare professionals was found to be the development and/or improvement of educational training for chaplains on medical practices and jargon (Norwood 2006, Marr et. al. 2007, Hart & Matorin 1997) and the development and/or improvement of educational and training programs for doctors on "faith factors in counseling" and "marketing [their] respect for chaplains (Buss 1999, 552). Additionally, Williams et. al. (2004) reported that clear role definition of chaplains is influential in the decrease of perceived stress generated within the work environment. In the absence of such training and clear role definition chaplains are marginalized until they learn to "skillfully see, speak, and move in ways that minimize difference[s]" in medical and religious practices (Norwood 2006, p 1).

Indeed, the number of empirical studies that explore the benefits and concerns associated with the presence of chaplains and the inclusion of chaplain care, pastoral care, and religious programming have increased in the last two decades. However, despite the increase in empirical studies on medical and prison chaplaincy, no research has been conducted to explore any aspect of chaplaincy's inclusion in corporations. In addition, the existing empirical studies on chaplaincy do not directly address the process through which the chaplain's role is defined and negotiated within their work environment; they address this process only as potentially influential in order to propose an explanation for particular outcomes (e.g. marginalization, disrespect by medical professional, uncertainty of chaplain care benefits, etc.). Consequently, this nascent stage

of understanding corporate chaplaincy and the integration of chaplains into corporate life appropriately prompts the use of qualitative methodology (Edmondson & McManus 2005). Before discussing the research methodology of this project, however, the following section briefly outlines the social theory that informed the orientation of this research.

### ***Basic Theoretical Orientation***

In seeking to understand corporate chaplaincy and the integration of chaplains into corporate life, the theoretical orientation of this project is framed in alignment with the negotiated order approach to social order and role, or identity, formation (both individual and collective) within the social context of organizations. As introduced by Strauss et.al. (1963) and later outlined in *Negotiations* (Straus 1978), there are four basic assertions posited by the negotiated order approach. The first assertion argues that the organization of social order is always negotiated in some form or another. Secondly, it is asserted that negotiations<sup>5</sup> are not random. Instead, negotiations are assumed to be patterned along communication pathways, inferring some inherent dependence on the structure of the organization. It is, thirdly, asserted that negotiations are “renewed, revised, and reconstituted over time,” thus temporally limited (Fine 1984, p 241). Lastly, the fourth assertion argues that the negotiated order must be revised after whenever the structure of the organization or *micropolitical* system changes.

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the concept of **negotiation** includes such processes as “bargaining, compromising, brokering, mediating, or collusion as well as a number of negotiative contexts ranging from situational encounters to international relation” (Maines 1977, p 243).

Hall (1997) explained that the negotiated order, which is identified as the social order of an organization, is “a complex web (and sequencing) of interrelated conditions, action/interaction, and consequences where the consequences of action *can* become conditions for future action” (p 400). As such, past negotiations are continually redefined and used to structure what occurs in the present (see also Mead 1929). This complex web, or negotiated order:

...on any given day could be conceived of as the sum total of the organization’s rules and policies, along with whatever agreement, understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained. These include agreements at entry level of organization, of every clique and coalition, and include covert as well as overt agreements (Strauss 1978, p 5-6).

It is, therefore, understood that the negotiated order is the total compilation of all agreements resulting from negotiations initiated by individual (“small-scale negotiations”), agents or organizational representatives (“large-scale negotiations”) on behalf of themselves and others (Maines 1977). Likewise, it is expected that this negotiated order, or compilation of negotiation agreements, is constructed, preserved, reconstructed, and enforced with the use of narratives. These narratives are then the foundational building blocks in the creation of organizational or collective identity (Loseke 2007).

Given this theoretical orientation to the negotiated order approach, the researcher seeks to understand corporate chaplaincy and the integration of chaplains into corporate life by focusing special attention on narratives (written and verbal) that offer insight to negotiations that have occurred between chaplains and between chaplains and their corporate clients. These narratives are expected to be instrumental in the construction,

preservation, and enforcement of both the individual and collective roles assumed by corporate chaplains. The procedures involved in the collection and analysis of this data are explained in the following section on research methodology which is then immediately followed by a presentation of the analytic results

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methods**

#### **Primary Data Source**

To identify the functions of corporate chaplains in the workplace and explore how they have been integrated into corporate life, this study uses two forms of qualitative data: in-depth interviews and non-technical literature, in accordance with the procedures outlined below. All participants and supplemental literature were gathered from within a nondenominational faith-based nonprofit organization that currently acts as a chaplain provider to corporations who solicit their services. This particular organization was chosen for one main reason: it is one of the largest providers of corporate chaplains in the United States, boasting many years of service in the industry and offering a large and diverse population for sampling. To protect the identity of this organization, it will be referred to as “Chaplains Preferred” throughout this paper.

#### **Data Collection**

##### ***Interviews***

A total of 21 semi formal interviews were conducted between August 2007 and February 2008, each lasting between 35 and 120 minutes. All interviews were conducted face-to-face at the participants’ worksite office or general work office (i.e. church office

or home office), excluding five interviews, which were conducted by telephone. During each interview the participant first completed a written demographic survey (position held, experience, and educational background). Following the survey, the participant answered a series of open-ended questions concerning organizational procedures (i.e. hiring, training, placement, and evaluation) and the role and service of corporate chaplains. The questions used to probe participants during this portion of the interview are listed in Appendix A. All face-to-face interviews were audiotape recorded and, along with the researcher's fieldnotes, transcribed verbatim. Information provided during telephone interviews was collected in the form of handwritten notes, taken throughout and immediately after each interview.

### *Sample*

All employees of the chaplain provider who actively served as an executive officer, program coordinator and/or chaplain in the organization were eligible for inclusion in this study, except those who were not employed by the organization for at least one month before the prospective interview date. Sampling procedures were modeled after Glaser & Strauss' (1967) theoretical sampling procedures, which allow emergent themes from the data to control the selection of participants, a process that continues until no new themes emerge in analysis- thematic saturation. Since access was granted to neither descriptive information nor contact information of organizational members as expected, sampling techniques common in snowball sampling were integrated into the sampling procedures (i.e. characteristics of interest were explained to

an interviewee and potential participants were suggested and placed in contact with the researcher, depending on their availability). This was limited only by the inability of most participants to share the names and/or contact information of potential participants. Permission to share information and freedom to contact potential participants were exclusively granted to two pre-selected individuals in managerial positions.

Nevertheless, the participants were diverse in their length of tenure at Chaplains Preferred, the number and size of their assigned client corporations, the location of worksites and service areas, and their individual personalities (e.g. introverted, extroverted, reserved in speaking, “loose cannon”, etc.) and backgrounds (i.e. religion-related job experiences, denominational affiliation, education, ethnicity, and language proficiencies). A total of 12 individuals within the organization who served as corporate chaplain to some capacity, including 5 individuals who also supervised and trained corporate chaplains, were interviewed. Each individual worked from 15 minutes to 40 hours per week, serving between one and 25 client firms with as many as 600 employees, or corporate members. In age, corporate chaplains ranged from 45 to 65 years old, and had committed two months to nearly 10 years of service to Chaplains Preferred at the time of their individual interviews.

Outlined in Table 1 are additional characteristics and distinguishing factors of each individual that participated in at least one interview over the course of this project. These general characteristics and distinguishing factors will be further discussed in the analysis section of this paper. Note, however, that the participant identification (PID) numbers used to organize the information in Table 1 will be used to not only cite the

source of quotes that were extracted from an interview, but also identify general characteristics of the participant who verbally shared each piece of quoted information.

**Table 1.** General Characteristics of Participants from Chaplains Preferred (CP)

<i>PID*</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Appt.</i>	<i>Tenure**</i>	<i>Service Location</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Job Experience</i>
v101	Male	Full-Time	10 years	Pennsylvania, Unknown Sites	Unknown	English	Navy Chaplain 30 years
d103	Male	Full-Time	2 1/2 years	Pennsylvania, Unknown Sites	B.S. (Economics), M. Div, M.A.	English	US Army Officer 10+ years, Quality Manager/Sales Rep, Pastor, Chaplain
d205	Male	Full-Time	6 years	New York, Multiple (2, 22) Sites	A.A. (Aviation Sciences), B.A.	English	Military Supervision 25 years, Pastoral Ministry 10 years
a104	Male	Full-Time	4 1/2 years	Pennsylvania, Multiple (4) Sites	A.A. (Liberal Arts), B.S. (Secondary Education), Aviation Tech & Pilot License	English	Teaching Bible 25+ years, Church Leadership 20+ years
a208	Male	Part-Time	3 years	New York, Multiple (4) Sites	B.A. (Theology), Post-Grad Seminary	English	Pastor, Chaplain
c206	Male	Part-Time	7 years	New York, One Site	M.A. & D. Min.	English	Business Executive 25 years, Pastor
c307	Male	Part-Time	4 months	New Jersey, One Site	B.A. Seminary	English/Russian	Pastor
c409	Male	Part-Time	3 years	New York, Multiple (2) Sites	B.A. (Business), M. Div.	English/Russian	Church Planter and Pastor 14 years, Missionary (Strategy Coordinator) 4 years
c611	Male	Part-Time	2 months	New York, One Sites	M.A. (Theology)	English	Pastor
c102	Female	Part-Time	3 years	Pennsylvania, One	HS Diploma	English	Pastor's Wife, Church Secretary
c510	Female	Part-Time	1 year	New York, Multiple (5) Sites	B.A. (Business)	English/Russian	Hospital Human Resources, Pastor's Wife 14years, Missionary
c712	Female	Part-Time	Unknown	New Jersey, Unknown Sites	Unknown	English	Unknown

\* Participant Identification Number

\*\* Tenure at Chaplain Preferred at time of first interview

### *Non-technical Literature*

Supplementing the data gathered from interviews was a collection of non-technical literature, including 1) an informational (or promotional) video and presentation notes used during the orientation of new clients to introduce chaplain services, 2) letters of correspondence and contract templates for exchanging information and establishing agreements between the chaplain provider and corporate clients, 3) organizational



brochures and business cards designed to target potential clients and the employees and family members of employees of current clients, and 4) newspaper and business journal articles discussing the religious movement in the workplace and introducing corporate chaplaincy to their public audience. Individuals who participated in this study, either upon request or at random, primarily provided these items. However, the website of the sampling organization, and popular business and religious based editorials (i.e. *Business Week*, *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Christianity Today*, and *Faith at Work*) served as additional sources of information. Appendix B lists all non-technical literature, or archival data, used in the analysis of this project, including material identification (MID) numbers for the citation of quoted information in the analysis section.

### **Analytic Procedure**

The grounded theory approach of constant comparison was used to analyze the data collected for this research project. With this analytic approach, a priori codes were not used to guide analysis. On the contrary, codes (and subsequent theoretical constructs) were allowed to naturally emerge from the data. This occurred, first, through an iterative “line-by-line” microanalysis of the data, from which *open* and *axial* codes were created to label and categorize data fragments. These codes were then organized to include an outline of their dimensions and properties and highlight all relationships between axial codes. Secondly, it was important to maintain a balance between objectivity and sensitivity in the analysis and presentation of the data by using the following four techniques: 1) “think comparatively” by comparing incident to incident, 2) “obtain

multiple viewpoints of an event” from various actors or multiple data sources (“within-method” triangulation to ensure consistency and reliability as discussed by Jick 1979 and Silverman 2003, e.g. comparing interview, office documents, brochure, etc.), 3) take a step back and ask what is going on to see if what you see “fits the reality of the data,” and 4) “maintain an attitude of skepticism” (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p 42-46).

Note that the steps mentioned above are listed separately, but in actuality they occurred simultaneously over the course of this project, resulting in a process of “constantly redesigning and reintegrating [all] theoretical notions” as more and more data was coded and analyzed (Glaser & Straus 1967, p 101). The main themes and relational constructs discovered during this process are presented in the analysis below. The analysis chapter is ordered to offer a description of corporate chaplaincy and the environment in which corporate chaplains work, discuss the barriers and constraints experienced by chaplains as they attempt to fulfill their responsibilities and daily activities, and highlight the formation of a collective identity through a single unified goal.

## Chapter 3

### Analysis

#### The Praying Field

This section is the first of two parts included in the analysis of chaplains' role definition and negotiation in corporate America: 1) The Praying Field and 2) A Single Unified Goal. Much lengthier than the second part, this section is purposed to offer a panoramic view, and thick description of corporate chaplaincy. Included in this panoramic view is a discussion of the chaplain's position within the formal organizational structure of Chaplains Preferred, their daily activities and guaranteed services, and the environment in which chaplains serve. Also included is a presentation of the process through which chaplains progress to establish themselves in the work environment of corporate clients, and the barriers that potentially constrain their integration into corporate life.

The analysis that follows is presented in **three parts**: 1) Survey of the Land 2) Establishing Presence, and 3) Primary Barriers to Service. In the first subsection, Survey of the Land, the topic of discussion includes the formal structure of ministerial positions within Chaplains Preferred, the role of chaplains in support of corporate clients and their immediate family members, and the complex work environment in which chaplains administer their services. This discussion is then followed by a presentation in the second subsection, Establishing Presence, on the four components that are essential to the

chaplains' ability to effectively establish themselves as a resource within the workplace and build relationships with the organizational members of their client corporations. Lastly, the third subsection, Primary Barriers to Service, concludes the analysis of the Praying Field with a discussion of two barriers that not only negatively affect the integration of chaplains into corporate life, but also negatively affect the availability of opportunities for chaplains to service corporate clients, their employees, and their family members.

Before proceeding with the results of analysis, it is important to begin with an understanding that when a potential client decides to approach Chaplains Preferred for more information or request services for their company, "a year long process of courting" (PID-d205) begins. This courtship process between Chaplains Preferred and the potential corporate client is designed to facilitate an exchange of information. Together, Chaplain Preferred and the potential client assess the needs of the corporate workplace, collecting information on the "number of employees, number of shifts, number of days that are covered" (PID-d205), gender and racial composition of employees, and language proficiencies of individuals at the client location. With this information, an agreement is reached on the appropriate benefits program for the client. Lastly, specifications on the type and number of chaplains needed are determined and the final recruitment, training and placement of chaplains take place.

No deliberate marketing is necessary to attract new corporate clients. Corporate leaders learn about the services and potential benefits of corporate chaplaincy "by word of mouth" (PID-v101), and are attracted to Chaplains Preferred because of the quality of service provided by their employed chaplains. Whether potential clients learn of this

chaplain providing organization by newspaper articles, magazine features, or referrals from friends, they are attracted to the chaplains' dedication to servicing the people, or 'top line,' of client corporations (i.e. employees, suppliers, customers, and affiliates). With this understanding, the following presentation of results begins with a survey of the ministerial actors, daily activities, and work environment included in the field of corporate chaplaincy.

### *Survey of the Land*

Chaplains: Who are they?

Corporate chaplains are both the legs and heart of the Chaplains Preferred organizational body. Working under the organizational belief that “[p]eople are always more important than profit” (MID-v101), they serve as the primary care givers for corporate clients and their employees. As the legs of the Chaplains Preferred organizational body, they maintain close contact with all client employees who choose to participate in the chaplain care program. As new agreements are formed with corporate firms, the chaplains are recruited by Chaplains Preferred from churches and congregations in the area of the client location and contracted into part-time positions. While only half of the chaplains interviewed for this project either attended seminary, completed bible college classes, or were formally trained or officially ordained as clergymen, they all had ministerial experience. This was particularly true for the female participants, since “many denominations do not credential women” (PID-d205). The

women recruited were pastors' wives, Sunday school teachers, missionaries and/or church secretaries. Likewise, the male chaplains were either experienced pastors, lay leaders in their respective church, missionaries, chaplains, and/or church planters (refer to Table 1 for descriptive information on the individuals who volunteered to participate in this study).

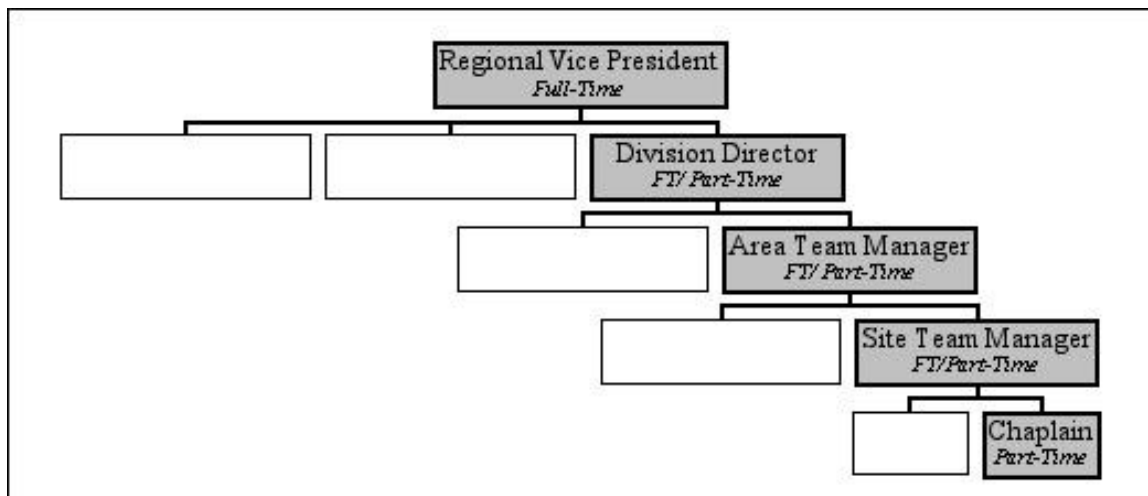
As outlined below in **Figure 1**, the hierarchal structure of ministerial positions within the regional branch of Chaplains Preferred that was examined consists of five main employment tiers: 1) chaplains (lower level employee), 2) site team managers (lower level management), 3) area team managers (second tier management), 4) division directors (third tier management), and a 5) regional vice president (upper level management). All managerial and director positions are available as either part-time or full-time appointments<sup>6</sup>, while chaplains are only contracted into part-time positions and the vice president is always a full-time employee. As part-time employees, **chaplains** are recognized as lower level organizational members within the formal structure of Chaplains Preferred. Details concerning the role of chaplains will be later discussed in the following section entitled "The Twenty-One Services;" however, it is important to note that chaplains are assigned to one or more corporate worksite locations as the primary care givers for corporate clients, their employees, and immediate family members. Chaplains who are assigned to the same worksite location are considered to be a part of a site team and, in the case of larger groups, a **site team manager** is appointed with the

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<sup>6</sup> Note here that organizational members serving in each of these positions were included in this study.

added responsibility of coordinating work schedules, hosting team meetings as needed, and compiling periodic reports of activities from each member of the site team.

**Figure 1.** Formal structure of ministerial positions within Chaplains Preferred



Chaplains and site team managers are under the direct supervision of **area team managers**, who serve across multiple worksites within a given geographic domain (e.g. city, county, etc. depending on the number of worksite locations and assigned chaplains) in the same capacity as site team managers, extending their services to include local support and consultation to chaplains and site team managers. One area team manager in New York explained that in this second tier managerial position:

I help manage the chaplain team to make sure that we cover each of the, each of the facilities that we visit as well as to make sure that they are doing their job as a chaplain. So I oversee that. And, and I try not to scrutinize too closely. I try to encourage them to do their job. (PID-a208)

Aside from his responsibility to organize and encourage chaplain activity, area team managers are required to report to their respective division directors to provide information detailing the services administered by chaplains to the individual members of their client corporations. Indeed, **division directors** are the immediate superiors to area team managers and, in locations where no area team manager is appointed, they are the direct supervisors of chaplains.

Division directors are responsible for processing information on chaplain activities collected from area team managers and chaplains. After collecting and processing the information, division directors present quarterly, semi-annual, and annual statistical reports of activities to corporate clients. According to one division director, who serves clients in New York and three other states in the northeastern region of the United States, the purpose of periodically presenting these statistical reports of chaplain activities is to,

... give them a sense of they are getting a return on their investment but also that their employees are being cared for. And what, what it also does is it gives them an idea of what the, what the climate of care is in their location because they do understand what types of issues people are talking about in their locations. (PID-d205)

Presenting these results on chaplain care services not only allows corporate clients to see the extent to which chaplain care is administered among their employees, but also gain insight on the issues that are most troubling for their employees. Coming together to exchange this information helps to fulfill one of the primary roles of the division director: to maintain the relationship between corporate management and the chaplain provider.



In addition to maintaining the relationship between corporate management and Chaplains Preferred, division directors are responsible for scheduling monthly meetings and trainings with all chaplains and managers; offering support and consultation to chaplains and managers in their individual divisions; and recruiting, training, assigning and evaluating chaplains. One division director in Pennsylvania simply stated that,

I'm in charge of the training, development, supervision of the chaplains in the state of Pennsylvania as well as the management and retention of our 19 clients in Pennsylvania. I assist the chaplains with whatever needs they may have in insuring they take care of the companies and their employees as best possible and here is a resource to them to ensure that we are completely caring for the clients on a daily basis. (PID-d103)

In this explanation, the role as division director greatly resembles that of a supervisor and mentor to chaplains, and manager of relations between client corporations and Chaplains Preferred.

Despite the rigid hierarchal depiction of ministerial positions within Chaplains Preferred, the chaplain's duties and responsibilities transcend all formal titles and job descriptions. Indeed, the title "**Chaplain**" is reserved for those who exclusively tend to the duties of chaplaincy within the workplace. However, these duties are not limited only to those who bear the formal title. Noting that the chaplain's duties extend beyond formal titles is not to suggest that there is no delineation between the specifications of each position. On the contrary, a clear distinction is drawn to distinguish the knowledge base, vested authority, and enlisted responsibilities assigned to each position- a distinction that will be addressed later in this paper. However, even with this distinction, it is expected

that all organizational members are prepared and willing to serve as chaplain when a chaplain is needed. As such, their service is expected to align with the standard services offered by the official chaplains of Chaplains Preferred to corporate clients.

#### “The Twenty-One Services”

“[T]he twenty-one services” (PID-d103) is a phrase that one division director, serving throughout Pennsylvania, used to refer to the standard services offered by the chaplains of Chaplains Preferred to the employees and immediate family members of corporate clients through the chaplain care program. Although the phrase “the twenty-one services” has been adopted by the researcher to refer to the services offered through the chaplain care program, it is necessary to mention that it is unclear how the division director concluded that the sum of the offered services is, in fact, **twenty-one**. The only numbered list of services was found on the back of a business card that was printed by a client corporation for a chaplain who, with a team of six other chaplains, served over 600 corporate employees and their immediate family members in Pennsylvania. On this card, as recreated in **Figure 2**, chaplain services are summarized into only eight numbered services, two of which (numbers 6 and 7) contain more than one service. Surprisingly, aside from this business card, the standard services provided through the chaplain care program are never numbered in organizational documents and formal presentations.

**Figure 2.** Chaplain service reminder from backside of business card

### **CHAPLAIN SERVICES**

1. Serve as chaplain for all employees and their immediate families.
2. Make regular worksite visits to build relationship and friendship.
3. On call 24 hours, 365 days a year for crisis and emergency situations.
4. Provide confidential pastoral discussions for issues such as: family conflict, illness, death, relationships, child rearing, stress and other personal issues.
5. Make hospital visits to employees and their immediate family members.
6. Officiate or attend weddings, as well as provide premarital planning.
7. Perform or attend funerals and provide follow-up grief care.
8. Provide options for assistance through local agencies and organizations.

**OUR WORK IS CARING, OUR CARE IS WORKING**

Nevertheless, despite the availability of only this limited list of numbered standard services provided on corporate client issued business cards, the services are often outlined in brochures, information sheets, presentation materials, and other documents distributed by Chaplains Preferred. These services, outlined in organizational documents and formal presentations, are separated into four main categories by Chaplains Preferred and, in most cases, exceed the sum of twenty-one. The four main categories of standard chaplain services are as follows: 1) chaplain care team activities, 2) pastoral care activities, 3) support activities, and 4) worksite relationships. Presented below is a discussion of the services included in each of these four categories that are provided by chaplains through the chaplain care program.

The first category of services, referred to as **chaplain care team activities**, include “planning, conducting or attending funerals” and offering grief support to employees and their families; making jail visits and offering aid to those in transition during and after incarceration; serving on notification teams when employees are “killed or injured in job-related accidents, or die on the job;” offering pre-marital counseling and

assisting in the wedding by “planning, officiating or attending” the ceremony, and making visits to other sites to support employees and their families (MID-b103, m117). These services are extended by the addition of **pastoral care activities**, included in the second category of chaplain services. Listed among pastoral care activities are opportunities for chaplains to engage in confidential discussions with employees about their personal issues and problems, provide referrals for specialized assistance (e.g. counseling, psychiatric, pastoral, etc.), coordinate outpatient and/or hospitalized care for “employees or immediate family members with drug or alcohol dependency and/or psychiatric problems,” and offer transitory support to “laid-off or fired employees” (MID-b103).

The services provided through the chaplain care team activities and the pastoral care activities are purposed to offer personal assistance to all corporate employees and their families. Yet, aside from these employee-centered services, chaplains also offer services designed to supply administrative and participatory support to managers and other corporate leaders. The support that chaplains provide to managers and other corporate leaders is classified in the third category of chaplain services, referred to as **support activities**. Through these support activities chaplains are available to “draft letters of ‘Concern,’ ‘Sympathy,’ ‘Appreciation’ and ‘Congratulations’” (MID-m117) on behalf of client corporations and corporate leaders, write articles and submit literature for corporate publications, “advise company leader on matters of religion, morals, ethics, and morale as they impact” work life, speak at corporate events, and attend to other requested services (MID-b103). As representatives of Chaplains Preferred, chaplains are also

invited to participate in the orientation of new employees by introducing themselves and explaining their services.

In the last category of chaplain services, chaplains participate in activities associated with the development of relationships between themselves and those employed at each corporate worksite. These activities, categorized as **worksite relationships**, primarily involve the scheduling of “brief, regular visits to company worksites to interact with employees” while on-duty, during operation hours and company meetings, and periodic contacts with employees by telephone, announcement postings, letters, cards and other forms of written correspondence (MID-b103, f416). Added to these activities, chaplains are committed to being available around the clock- 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, including all national holidays, for emergency care in the event of individual, family, or company crises.

In short, one brochure, which is purposed to encourage corporate employees to take advantage of the chaplain care team services, plainly stated that,

The company chaplain team is established to serve as “**Designated Helpers**” for all employees and immediate family members. The company chaplains’ responsibility is to *Care For People, to do whatever it takes to help you and yours...* The company chaplains are *always* available... (MID-b204)

On one hand, the open-ended responsibility of chaplains to do “whatever it takes to help” clients and their immediate family members encourages chaplains to respond to all appearances of need with their best effort to offer assistance. In these cases, chaplains voluntarily accept more responsibility, such that, the role of chaplain is negotiable by the

needs of corporate clients, extending beyond the original outline of their responsibilities in organizational documents and formal presentations. For example, when speaking of young immigrants who settle for work at one of his lumber mill worksites, the bilingual chaplain in New York mentioned that,

... in some cases you know their lives would be better especially the younger ones to be able to do something else than what they're doing. And I have been encouraging one young man to get his GED. He's like 20 years old I think, maybe 21, very sharp young man but he's very limited in his options because he's an immigrant and he has no education. But he's very smart. I think he could get his GED in no time... But my goal is to help maximize who they are... (PID-c409)

Recognizing the young employee's sharp mind and need for support and direction, this chaplain accepted the personal responsibility of encouraging "this young man to get his GED" and set a greater goal of helping to "maximize" the gifts and qualities of other clients within his worksite locations. Similar in her response, the female chaplain who serves five corporate clients in the same area of New York assumes the responsibility of helping each woman "to grow into a strong, independent female" (PID-c510).

On the other hand, contrary to chaplain's role being negotiable by the visible **needs** of corporate clients, there are cases in which the chaplain's role is negotiated by the **requests** of corporate clients for services that are not explicitly outlined in their list of contracted services. One request that is notoriously familiar among the chaplains of Chaplains Preferred is the request for money. A native Spanish-speaking chaplain in New Jersey explained that for his Hispanic (or Latino) clients:

They think I have [a lot of money, that] I, I am a rich man because... I say to them I'm here because I, I love all of you. I have a ministry that call me to, to minister to you and to help you as a volunteer not because I'm, I try to raise money. I, I'm here because I'm, I feel my responsibility before God to be with you and to, to help you. (PID-c307)

The clients' rationale is that, if this chaplain can work a job with no consideration or motivation for money, he must be rich and able to offer financial assistance to those who are less fortunate. In situations like this, where it is unclear whether a client's request is appropriate or not, chaplains are encouraged to contact their division director for guidance. With each request for additional services beyond those listed in organizational documents and formal presentations, the boundaries concerning what the chaplain will and will not do are called into negotiation. In response to previous clients' request for money, the following sentence has been added to all formal lists of what chaplains will NOT do: "Chaplains will not lend money for any purpose" (MID-b204, MID-b305, MID-m117). When combined, both formally outlined services and services resulting from informal negotiations with client needs and requests serve to define the chaplain's role within the corporate workplace.

As a testament of their dedication, the corporate chaplains of Chaplains Preferred have completed more than one million hours to their service. They have planned, officiated, and/or attended more than 700 funeral and 500 weddings. They have completed more than 100,000 worksite visits and 16,000 hospital visits, and they have written more than 7,500 letters of concern, congrats, and sympathy for CEOs and other corporate leaders (PID-a208). In short, this is a testament not only of their dedication to serving corporate clients, but also of corporate clients taking advantage of the services

that they have to offer. A position in the workplace provides each chaplain with “the optimum opportunity to extend help, hope and encouragement” (MID-v101), but the question of how far their services can extend is a matter of understanding the territorial boundaries of their work environment. Thus, to understand the territorial boundaries of their work environment, it is necessary to address a term that was frequently used within Chaplains Preferred: **worksite**.

### Complex Extended Worksite

Standard in the vocabulary of all Chaplains Preferred employees, documents, and correspondences is the term “**worksite**.” This term represents the physical location of the corporation (e.g. office building, factory, trucking station, storefront, farmland, etc.), which serves as the stationary housing facility for corporate operations and employee activity, usually consistent of cubicles, offices, machinery, work stations, break rooms, etc. The definition of this term is client centered, such that its use is limited to the discussion of the place where corporate clients are physically positioned for daily work activities. Nevertheless, this term can be useful in the initial conceptualization of the chaplain’s workplace and subsequent workplace conditions.

When contracted by Chaplains Preferred into the chaplain position, chaplains are assigned to one or more corporate worksites, with the responsibility of making weekly visits to the resident clients. It is at this site that chaplains are positioned to work and attend to their weekly activities, making the corporate worksite equivalent to the primary worksite of corporate chaplains. Note, however, that the chaplain’s worksite extends



beyond the workplace of corporate clients to allow chaplains the freedom to “[v]isit employees or immediate family members wherever care can be expressed and help given: hospitals, nursing homes, funeral homes, family homes, or other neutral sites” (MID-f416). Unlike the corporate worksite, the chaplain’s worksite is far from stationary and noted by all interviewees to be highly unpredictable and prone to change from day to day, depending on the needs expressed by each individual request for help. For example, one area team manager, who is responsible for servicing four corporate worksite locations throughout Pennsylvania, recounted a few activities from the previous day:

... after that I went on my way to another branch where I visit once a week. It’s about 30 miles from here. I go to that branch but there’s also someone from here that’s in the hospital that yesterday had triple bypass surgery—had surgery. And so on that trip I stopped. I, I went to the worksite at the warehouse and then I went to the hospital and checked in on him just after surgery and was there and met with family members, prayed with them and saw how he was doing and so I made a hospital visit from that. And made another stop back to that branch talked to some more employees there, talked with a, a zone manager about some things going on in his life. He had some health issues going on that he was dealing with. And then came back here... (PID-a104)

In just a couple of hours, this chaplain traveled four times to visit three different locations: two corporate worksite branches (the main corporate worksite and the corporate worksite located 30 miles away) and a hospital. While he was only officially assigned to the two worksite branches, the hospital was temporarily transformed into an additional worksite location by the presence of the corporate employee undergoing bypass surgery. This transformation occurred with neither a formal agreement between

the hospital and Chaplains Preferred, nor an introduction of services to management or hospital staff members.

The inclusion of multiple stationary and temporary remote worksite locations into the broader definition of the chaplain's extended worksite reveals a complex work environment. As such, it is understandable that "[n]othing is ever typical" in the workday of a corporate chaplain. On any given day, a brief corporate worksite visit can be extended to include a number of visits to temporary worksite locations beyond the physical boundary of the corporate worksite, especially in the case of an emergency. The area team manager who serves four corporate clients in New York shared a story that is exemplar of this potential for extended worksite boundaries due to crisis:

He had a heart attack on the job site the day I was visiting and this particular site I would go there once a week for maybe 45 minutes to an hour. That morning I happened to be there he had a heart attack while I was there. I got to pray with him before they carted him off in the ambulance. I went to the hospital to be with his wife. We waited for several hours till things settled down. And that man ended up having to battle 10 times for his life in the next 24 hours... [with] a 10% chance of living... (PID-a208)

In this case, a "45 minutes to an hour" weekly visit to the corporate worksite not only resulted in an extension of his service area to include the hospital, but also lengthened his time of availability to the employee and his wife for an extra 24 hours. The employee survived the heart attack and has, since then, formed a real bond with the area team manager. Nevertheless, this ever-potential morphing of worksite boundaries raises questions concerning the clarity of organizational boundaries, transferal of roles and role

expectations, and the extent to which regulatory mechanisms are enacted within and beyond organizational boundaries- all partly addressed in the following section on establishing presence and later discussions of barriers.

### *Establishing Presence*

At this point, it is understood that chaplains are both the heart and legs of Chaplains Preferred, operating within a complex and dynamic system of work environments. As such, each chaplain provides services that often exceed and/or test the boundaries of their formal role (i.e. their role as it is outlined in organizational documents, introductory materials, and formal presentations). In this subsection, the analysis of The Praying Field will continue with a discussion of the four main components that are essential to the chaplains' ability to effectively establish themselves as a resource within the workplace and build relationships with the members of their client corporations. In addition, this discussion will introduce these four components as fundamental and most important in the chaplain's opportunity to fulfill their role within every worksite location.

In order for chaplains to effectively administer their services to corporate clients, it is **absolutely** imperative that corporate organizational members are first, familiar with all available services provided by chaplains and second, trusting of the chaplain's ability to be dependable when needed and confidential with all information shared during pastoral discussions. It is for this reason that corporate chaplains consciously focus the majority of their time and energy on establishing themselves as a resource and "friend"

within the workplace- a process that has been termed ‘establishing presence’ by the researcher. The process of **establishing presence** consists of four key components: 1) **The Initiation**- the introduction of the chaplain care program to members of the client corporation, including the individual introduction of all chaplains assigned to a given worksite location, 2) **The Paper Trail**- written reminders of chaplain care services and the terms of program participation, which includes establishing contact with the immediate families of corporate employees, 3) **To “Be There”**- face-to-face chaplain-to-client interactions through weekly visits to the corporate worksite location, and 4) **Raising A Standard**- behavioral examples of the chaplain’s commitment to service with integrity. It is during this process that the written and verbal presentations of the representatives of Chaplains Preferred (i.e. the executive officers, managers, and chaplains) formally define the chaplain’s role within each worksite location to corporate executives and employees. Additionally, it is during this process that the chaplain’s role is informally shaped, and further negotiated, as a result of chaplains-to-client interactions that take place within and beyond the boundaries of the corporate worksite.

### The Initiation

The process of establishing a presence at the corporate worksite starts “before [the] official start of chaplain services” (PID-d205). Before chaplains arrive for service, Chaplains Preferred provides corporate leaders with an introductory letter and service information sheet “to be signed by the senior company executive and mailed to employees’ home addresses” (MID-r423). These documents include a list of services

provided through the chaplain care program, the terms of employee participation, and the name and contact information- the “home number, pager [or cell] number, [and] office number” (MID-f416)- for every member of the chaplain care team. This introductory package serves as an announcement for the newly established chaplain care program, including a list of services that are freely available to all employees and their immediate families. After the mailing of these information packages, the process of establishing a presence at the corporate worksite continues with a **startup meeting**, or orientation for new corporate clients and their employees. It is during this startup meeting that a corporate leader formally introduces the chaplain, or chaplain team in the case of larger and more diverse companies, to the employees stationed at each corporate worksite. Following the formal introduction of the chaplain(s), approximately 30 minutes are reserved for the chaplain to give an informal presentation of their services and address any questions or concerns that those in attendance may have (MID-f315).

Unfortunately for the chaplain, it is not mandatory for all employees to attend the startup meeting. Likewise, even though information about the chaplain care program is mailed to the home address of all employees, many employees and their families are still unfamiliar with the available chaplain services. In one instance, an area team manager recalled representing one of his client corporations at the funeral of an employee and the family “didn’t even know there was a chaplain at the company” (PID-a104) to serve the needs of employees and their families. Consequently, the process of establishing a presence with corporate employees must extend beyond the mailed introductory packages and the startup meetings.

## The Paper Trail

Since the introductory packages and the startup meetings alone are not fully adequate for chaplains to establish a presence in the corporate workplace, the process continues with what the researcher has termed a strategic effort to leave a ‘paper trail’. This paper trail is consistent of brochures, information sheets, articles, and even business cards (designed and provided by corporate clients, like the business card recreated in **Figure 2**) that are passed along by way of bulletin board postings, hand-to-hand distribution, interoffice mailings, and mailings to employee homes. The purpose of maintaining this paper trail is one fold: to promote employee familiarity with the availability and accessibility of benefits provided through the chaplain care program. As a result, the messages are often brief, repetitive, and identical to one another. Exemplary of the brief and repetitive nature of these messages is the following excerpt from an employee-targeted brochure:

[title] An Important Reminder [message] This employee benefit is provided by your company at **NO COST** to you or your family members. All discussions with your Chaplains are **CONFIDENTIAL, NEUTRAL** from company business operations and **VOLUNTARY**. Chaplain services are available to **ALL** employees and their immediate families. (MID-b204, MID-b305)

Consistent with the information shared in all introductory materials and presentations, it is stressed in this message that 1) chaplain care is available at “NO COST” to “ALL” employees and their immediate family members, 2) participation in the benefits of this program is completely “VOLUNTARY,” 3) chaplains operate independent of the client

corporation and therefore remain “NEUTRAL” in all corporate decisions and daily activities, and 4) all information shared during chaplain pastoral discussions are to remain “CONFIDENTIAL.”

While employees may become familiar with chaplain services and the terms of participation in the chaplain care program through the scripted messages provided in the paper trail, scripted messages are often impersonal and do not facilitate the building of chaplain-to-client relationships within the workplace. As such, the familiarity of corporate employees with chaplain services is limited to the content of the scripted messages and letters by Chaplains Preferred, and left unsubstantiated by actual experience with the chaplain’s character and behavior. Needless to say, the process of establishing a presence with corporate employees must not only extend beyond the mailed introductory packages and the startup meetings, but also continue beyond the impersonal contact of the paper trail.

To “Be There”

To counter the impersonality of the paper trail, the process of further establishing a presence in the workplace continues with the responsibility of chaplains to just “be there” with and for all members of the client corporation. Naturally, the use of ‘**BE**’ in this quoted phrase was not meant to suggest that chaplains wander aimlessly or loiter about the corporate worksite until beckoned by an executive or employee. On the contrary, the requirement of all chaplains to “be there” comes with the added responsibility of cultivating relationships of familiarity with each member of the

corporation, which ideally includes their immediate families as well, and working to earn their trust. This task of building familiar relationships and earning the trust of corporate organizational members usually takes “six months to a year” (PID-d103), but it all starts with a simple greeting and question: “hi, how are you?” (PID-c102)

To offer this simple greeting and question, chaplains are required to schedule time to visit their corporate worksites at least once a week. During their weekly worksite visits each chaplain walks around, “visit[s] people, and talk[s] to them about whatever it is they want to talk about” (PID-a104). These discussions last for no more than five minutes, as not to distract from the employees’ daily work activities. In a brief recollection of his previous worksite visit, one area team manager who serves as a chaplain for four client corporations in Pennsylvania recalled that he:

... chatted with someone about their children, about the summer job their child has or they’re going through college and how they’re liking their job... I talked to someone about a faith issue where they were, they had some we’re discussing something about prayer and how God is answering their prayers... I talked with someone about a further employee that is dying of cancer and I got a report on their condition... Talked to someone that is going to work on their master’s degree at nighttime... they asked me to pray for a cousin who is needing an organ transplant... I talked with someone that’s about to have a baby and the frustrations they’re going through right now. (PID-a104)

During this worksite visit, the area team manager spoke with multiple clients about their children, their physical health and the health of others, their educational plans, and their prayer requests all while walking around the facilities of the worksite location. Other chaplains would talk to employees about the weather or a recent event, and many recalled



times when they would “just say hi and leave. And that’s okay” (PID-a104) because employees must first become comfortable with the chaplain’s presence in their workspace, and each hello brings them one step closer to achieving that greater comfort.

The importance of the chaplain’s presence to the establishment of rapport within the corporate workplace is best explained by the division director who supervises chaplain activity throughout his division of Pennsylvania. He explained that,

... the chaplain actually goes to visit to get to know the employees to build relationships with them so that when they do have issues the employees have a face, have a name, someone they go to who is, and is ready and available to be there for them... it’s not always what is shared between the chaplain and the employee that’s important, it’s also our chaplain being consistent with the visitation... it’s okay and a must to be predictable. We want them to know you’re going to be there Monday afternoon every week because they may carry something through the weekend because they know you’re going to be there on Monday and they want to share it... trust is built with that consistency. Trust is built through the verbal exchange in which they know that nothing is going to be shared outside of that. And basically trust is just built by the continual presence of our, our chaplains and the retention of our chaplains. (PID-d103)

It is clear that what is most important about visiting corporate worksite locations is to establish a presence and reputation of consistency, predictability, and trustworthiness.

Regardless of how much information is exchanged between chaplain and corporate employee during a conversation, each interaction presents the employee with an opportunity to experience the chaplain’s ability to keep even the smallest piece of shared information confidential. In addition, each interaction allows the employee to determine whether the chaplain has a genuine desire to care for all individuals within the

corporation, whether or not they choose to participate in the chaplain care program, and service their needs upon request.

### Raising A Standard

Recognizing the influential power of each weekly interaction on the employees' ultimate perception of the chaplain care team, each chaplain of Chaplains Preferred tailors his/her behavior to ensure that they appear as caring and trustworthy as they know themselves to be. First and foremost, to appear caring and trustworthy, chaplains are careful to make it clear that "[they] are not spies for the management" (PID-a104). They do not participate in worksite gossip, share private information of employees with other corporate organizational members, or "even share among chaplains things that [they] learn from someone" (PID-a104) in the workplace. Their commitment to maintaining confidentiality is even evidenced in the brief recollection of conversations held with corporate employees, which was previously shared by the area team manager who serves as a chaplain for four client corporations in Pennsylvania. In that excerpt, the area team manager automatically omitted all gender specific pronouns, using the neutral "they" instead of "he" or "she," to conceal even the gender of the clients with whom he spoke.

Additionally important in establishing themselves as caring and trustworthy, is the perceived dependability of chaplains to be honorable to their word, present when needed, and unquestionable in their contact with others. As such, chaplains are mindful to arrive at their worksites on time and promptly respond to requests for support in corporate or individual hardship, distress, tragedy, and/or crisis. Since the promise of Chaplains

Preferred is to provide 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year service to corporate clients, it is also customary for chaplains to request that someone else (another chaplain) serves in their place when they are either unavailable or unable to meet the needs of a client. In addition to working to prove their commitment to promptly offering services to all corporate clients, chaplains are quick to remind corporate organizational members “we do not proselytize<sup>7</sup> people” (PID-a104) and “we don’t push religion” (PID-a208, PID-510). In fact, the subject of faith is never discussed unless first initiated by the client him/herself- “we’re just here to be a friend” (PID-c102, PID-c307) and “a listener” (PID-a104).

All chaplains are taught during a two-day training period to enter corporate worksite facilities with the understanding that they are guests of the corporate owner. The division director who is positioned in New York explained that,

We are a guest of the owner. And our chaplains need to understand that. This is not the church that they may be ministering in or the community outreach that they run or something of that nature. You’re a guest of this owner and you’re going into a place where those, those employees haven’t asked for you. And you need to approach that relationship very carefully and professionally and skillfully so that you do appear as a help and not, not a hindrance and don’t represent anything that is going to be detrimental to the cause. (PID-d205)

To do this, chaplains are to be mindful not to distract employees from their work, or hinder productivity. Likewise, since it is recognized that chaplains still enter into the workplace as ministers, the division director cautions chaplains not to “represent anything

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<sup>7</sup> To proselytize is to convert or attempt to convert someone from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.

that is going to be detrimental to the cause.” Aside from abstaining from worksite gossip as earlier mentioned, chaplains work to preserve an appearance of decency and neutrality as they interact with clients.

This is especially the case when interacting with clients of the opposite sex at the corporate worksite, or any other neutral site, at which time they limit physical contact and maintain an appropriate distance at all times. The area team manager who serves in Pennsylvania commented that,

... we are never to be alone in a private place with someone of the opposite sex, opposite gender. I would never meet with a lady in here where we could not be seen... we may not close the door and not be heard. We'll always have an open window so that, that we can't be accused of, of any improprieties or be tempted in that way. So we, we are very careful that we do not travel alone. We will not go to someone's house, for instance, and visit someone of the opposite gender when they're there alone unless we take, in my case I take my wife along or make sure that there's someone else, that there's another adult at that house... we don't get a lady chaplain to visit a man alone or vice versa. (PID-a104)

This limited interaction with opposite-sexed individuals within and beyond the boundaries of the corporate worksite was even evidenced in the researcher's experience with interviewing male chaplains. Despite the presence of a traveling companion, all office doors and windows remained opened during interviews, and in many cases the male participant invited an additional person to attend interview sessions (i.e. a wife, daughter, or co-worker).

This limited interaction with opposite-sex individuals is not, however, limited to male chaplains, but it extends to include female chaplains as well. In fact, contact with

clients of the opposite sex is almost all together avoided by the female chaplains who were interviewed. One female chaplain who serves five client corporations in New York shared that her role is to “establish relationships with women and try to meet their needs” (PID-c510). While this description greatly resembles that of male chaplains, it was only with women that their expressed responsibilities and target clients were gender specific to same-sex individuals.

As previously discussed, the process of establishing a presence with each individual organizational member in the corporate workplace is necessary in order to facilitate employee familiarity with chaplain services and trust in chaplain availability, confidentiality, and genuine desire to care for all those who choose to participate in the chaplain care program. The pace at which this process of establishing a presence within the client corporation proceeds is contingent upon three external stimuli: time, managerial support, and worksite compatibility. A lack of adequate time to build rapport with organizational members, minimal managerial support, and inaccessible worksite locations all work effectively to slow the pace of establishing a presence within the corporate workplace. The negative influences of these three stimuli will not be discussed any further, but to mention that they are traceable in the foundation of the primary barriers to the chaplain’s ability to provide services in the workplace, establish an adequate definition of their role and purpose, and negotiate their integration into the corporate community.

### *Primary Barriers to Service*

So far, the first two subsections of this analysis have discussed 1) the position and responsibilities of chaplains within their complex system of work environments, both within and beyond the boundaries of the corporate worksite location and 2) the process of establishing presence, which is essential to the chaplains' ability to effectively serve as a resource within the workplace and build relationships with corporate clients. To conclude the analysis of The Praying Field, this third subsection is purposed to address the presence of barriers within the corporate work environment that constrain the integration of chaplains into corporate life. The presence of barriers is introduced by two primary sources: 1) the **physical environment** of corporate worksite locations and 2) the **negative responses** of corporate organizational members to the chaplain care program. The resulting barriers constrain the chaplain's ability to establish presence, administer services, and commune with the employees of their corporate clients. As such, this subsection not only includes a description of the barriers and their effect on chaplain care of corporate clients, but also a presentation of adaptations made by chaplains in negotiation with the limitations of their respective work environments. These adaptive means of service are thus highlighted because they refine and, in some cases, redefine the chaplain's role and terms of service within the corporate workplace.

#### Physical Environment

From engineering firms, trucking companies, banks, and paper mills to snack food manufacturers, copy centers, hotels, and storefront pizzerias, the corporations that solicit

the services of corporate chaplains are varied in size, industry, and daily produced goods and services. To little surprise, the physical layout and structural floor plans of each corporate client's facilities are as varied as their daily routines and activities. While some office arrangements are convenient for chaplains to safely walk around and have confidential conversations with corporate employees (e.g. facilities with personal office space and/or cubicles for all organizational members), other office arrangements are less convenient and, in many cases, dangerous and inaccessible for chaplain visits. Consider the following two corporate worksite locations: 1) a lumber mill in New York and 2) a manufacturing company in Pennsylvania. The lumber mill was a company that one of the chaplains remembered serving for only a few months. He recalled instances when he would "go over there and just stand while somebody's sharpening a blade or while somebody is you know cutting a pallet or cutting a log" (PID-c409). At the manufacturing site, the second site listed above, there are multiple facilities including a farm, multiple production lines, a gift shop and concessions station, and an auxiliary warehouse, or storage facility. On the farm, "they have about 600 head of cattle" (PID-a104) and the production lines are consistent of industrial ovens, deep fryers, hot water baths, and other large and noisy pieces of machinery for prepping, packaging, and distributing items.

Both of these worksite locations are potentially dangerous, inconvenient, and/or inaccessible work environments that inadvertently introduced a great barrier to the development of chaplain-to-client relationships and an additional limitation to the access that corporate employees have to chaplains within the workplace. The area team manager

supervising the chaplain care team at the manufacturing company in Pennsylvania explained that,

... we've gone into almost every different kind of work environment. Some are much easier than others. But just sometimes being there I know one of our, one of our chaplains has actually been relegated to the break room. They don't want him on the floor; they don't want him in the work environment. They either think he could, he could get hurt or he could endanger others. (PID-a104)

In this case, the solution to avoiding injury in the potentially harmful work environment was to isolate the chaplain to the break room. By isolating the chaplains to the break room, (s)he is not only limited in contact to only those who visit the break room, but also limited in the range of topics that can be discussed confidentially in a communal area. Fortunately, however, isolation was not the only solution that was offered to chaplains by management.

Another common solution to avoiding injury in a potentially harmful environment, or contamination in a clean zone, that was shared by participants was for corporate clients to provide chaplains with "an employee handbook so that the chaplain understands the guidelines under which the company wants their people to operate" (PID-d205), including all safety procedures and dress code requirements. In fact, it is customary that when entering new companies, division directors and area team managers ask, "... what is the protocol? Where may we go? Where may we not go? How are we to be dressed? Are there any special safety rules and precautions that we need to be aware of?" (PID-a104) It is, then, the expectation of management that chaplains follow



the same safety guidelines as employees to allow for the unlimited freedom of chaplains to walk around the corporate worksite and talk to all organizational members during their weekly visits. “There is one company that I go to that requires steel-toed shoes,” explained an area team manager in Pennsylvania. “So I have to wear steel-toed shoes the day I go to that company... and [in another company] we have to wear non-slip shoes, a hairnet, and earplugs” (PID-a104). While, in cases like these, chaplains are able to visit with employees on the factory floor, the production line or even in the kitchen, daily work activities are often too noisy to allow for any coherent or fluid conversation, hence the need for earplugs. Likewise, work areas are usually saturated with workers, limiting the potential opportunities for confidential pastoral discussions.

Indeed, some chaplains were provided personal office space to serve as a more quiet and neutral meeting area in their resident corporate worksites, but most of the chaplains interviewed were not given such a space. As a result, chaplains devised alternative means of establishing presence with organizational members, both within and outside the physical boundaries of the corporate worksite location, to supplement their presence and localized service in the work areas designated by the corporate client (i.e. the break room and/or any other approved areas of visitation). Within the physical boundaries of the corporate worksite, chaplains would identify all communal areas, schedule visitations around both high- and low-traffic times of the day, and maximize their potential for chaplain-to-client contact by concentrating more time on servicing the identified communal areas. In addition, one New York chaplain mentioned that he usually tries to “bring in some cookies or something like that” or for his Bosnian clients he likes to “get some Bosnian snacks and bring it in, they love that” (PID-c409).

However, beyond the boundaries of the corporate worksite chaplains would send greeting cards and service reminders to the home address of corporate employees and their families- like a New York chaplain who, if [he] hear[s] that an employee is sick or in the hospital or, or they had an injury or something like that [he] will send them a card” (PID-c206). Others would schedule appointments to meet with employees outside the workplace. Exemplar of this is one chaplain’s commitment to “provide them with lunch once” (PID-c611) in order to give them an opportunity to talk for more than five minutes when they are not on duty.

As varied as the physical layout and structural floor plans of each corporate client’s facilities are the individuals who are employed and positioned within the companies’ workforce. These employed individuals vary in race, ethnicity (or national origin), language proficiencies, educational background. Of additional importance to this study, are the variations in religious affiliation and sentiments of faith among individuals within the companies’ workforce. Chaplains noted the presence of Christians, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims- the majority of whom were recognized as either non-practicing or nominal believers who “really just pay lip service to” (PID-c409) the traditions and practices of their faith and/or denomination, but are hardly committed or active. Also included in the chaplains’ mention of Christians, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims, were Atheists and individuals who identified themselves as non-religious. Needless to say, with such variation in religious affiliation and sentiments of faith, there is great diversity in the individual reactions of corporate organizational members to the presence of chaplains, and religion, in the workplace. Client responses to the presence of chaplains in the workplace range from unquestioned acceptance to indifference and sheer rejection,

ultimately affecting the chaplain's ability to be of service to corporate clients, whether positively or negatively. It is the negative response from clients, however, that presents a barrier to the effective provision of chaplain care services and prompts the next point of discussion.

### Negative Client Response

Within the first 10 to 15 minutes of every interview, without fail, a chaplain would share at least one experience in which individuals within the corporate workplace received their presence and their morning (or afternoon) greetings with negative responses and/or rejection. They remarked that some individuals are very clear about their "feel[ing] that religion has no place whatsoever in the workplace" (PID-c206). So, in response to the chaplain's weekly visits, "some people just you know kind of roll their eyes" (PID-c510). One chaplain in New York eventually admitted that he, "on many occasions, do[es]n't even say hi" to some organizational members because "they look up and they see that [he's] there and they frown or snort or make some gesture," signaling their disapproval of his presence in their workspace or office (PID-c206). While this chaplain's refusal to "even say hi" after receiving negative gestures from individuals at this worksite location may seem like an appropriate response to rejection, it was particularly anomalous and pessimistic of the potential for individual change when compared to the response of all other chaplains. All other chaplains were in agreement and acceptance of the fact that rejection is to be expected and perfectly normal.

Accepting rejection as perfectly normal, one chaplain serving in New York stated with great conviction that,

It's not their job. It's not their job. It's our job to build rapport. It's our job to make sure they feel comfortable with talking to us. It's our job to make sure that they know why we're here. And nothing that happens in the workplace, not even what they do or they say should stop us from attending to our job in building rapport. (PID-c611)

The personal acceptance of responsibility for rapport building within the workplace allows them to withstand rejection and continue working to fulfill their responsibilities as corporate chaplain to each of their client corporations. They continue with optimism, believing that while their services were not needed at that particular moment of rejection, "everybody needs help sometimes" (PID-c510).

Continuing his statement concerning chaplain's responsibility for building relationships with corporate clients, the New York chaplain equated the role of a chaplain in the workplace to the presence of an oxygen mask on an airplane. In his comparison, he said,

When you get on the plane, they go over the procedure on how to use the oxygen mask in the event there're malfunctions with the plane and they lose air pressure in the plane. You're to put it over your face, but you don't actually expect to use it. You don't actually expect that there's going to be an emergency situation where it requires the use of an oxygen mask. However, if you get on a plane and there's no oxygen mask, if I ever get on a plane and there's no oxygen mask, I would immediately exit the plane. Not because you expect that something's going to happen, but because you want that there for security and safety purposes, knowing that you have that fall back. You [as a chaplain] are not going to be used everyday, and hopefully you won't be used at all. But the idea is that

you're there whenever the need arises and that's what's so special about employers uh, hiring chaplains to come in and service their employees is that it sends a message out that we care... (PID-c611)

Indeed, the corporate chaplain's hope for the opportunity to care for corporate clients, coupled with their acceptance of responsibility for building relationships within the workplace, is a means of coping with negative responses in the workplace, but it is only the first step.

After accepting responsibility for building rapport with clients and deciding to be hopeful for change in the negative attitudes of those who reject them, chaplains must wait for an "open door" (PID-c102, PID-a104, PID-a208, PID-c409), or open opportunity to minister to (or service) the needs of individuals within the body of corporate organizational members. Open doors are important and necessary in the facilitation of chaplain services primarily because, as previously stated, participation in the chaplain care program is absolutely voluntary and the corporate members themselves must first initiate confidential pastoral discussions. Thus, without open doors, chaplains are restricted to saying hello, engaging in nothing more than small talk. Interestingly however, the stories shared by the chaplains involved in this study revealed that the opening of these doors can be encouraged in one of two ways: either through persistence (or prodding) on behalf of the chaplain or through the seemingly random occurrence of "miraculous interventions" (PID-a208).

The first method of helping to open doors to the various thoughts, life situations, and problems of corporate clients is to be persistent in chaplain-to-client interactions. In the excerpt below, the chaplain would pass the office of this "one fellow" who had, in the

past, made it very clear that he did not want the chaplain to come near him. During this particular visit, however, the chaplain stood in the doorway of the client's office with a smile and said,

... how's it going? [The client responded,] Oh okay. I said, are you sure? Well (pause) Uh (pause). Well? What does that mean? And that opened the door. I could have stopped at the first but I really felt that I needed to ask a little bit more without prying. And I felt if he said stay out of my life, hey that's fine. (PID-a208)

To no surprise, the chaplain stepped into the doorway of this client fully prepared to accept rejection. Nevertheless, he "felt that [he] needed to ask" for elaboration on the client's two word response. It was his persistence in testing the physical boundaries that the client had previously set and following the client's response with a question that opened a door into what was troubling him on that day.

On the other hand, in the absence of persistence in testing boundaries and gently prodding clients with follow-up question, natural life events occur in which the responsibility of the chaplain is to be there as a resource at the moment a client is in need of their assistance and requests their services. During these natural life events, "[s]ometimes a tragedy, sometimes a death, [or] an illness in the family" (PI D-a208), clients realize that chaplains are not only available, but also approachable and helpful in times on need. One area team manager serving in New York commented that,

... we have seen, as chaplains, people that initially don't want anything to do with us because they either resent us or don't, don't like the idea of faith in the workplace, which is what you know whole thing is about. And

yet what happens is if you build relationships even if they just see you there on a weekly basis, in a tragedy or, or a, a challenge comes to their life, they're willing to come to you because they think maybe this person could help me. There have been a number of miraculous interventions where they recognize they can come see you. (PID-a208)

As is common in the language of chaplains, this participant referred to the natural occurrence of tragedy and life challenges as a “miraculous intervention” in chaplain-to-client relationships, improving the perceived use, trustworthiness, and dependability of the chaplain by the client. These miraculous interventions not only open the door to engage in discussions with those who experienced the stress of life or tragedy first hand, but also those who work and commune with these stressed individuals. For example, this same area team manager recalled a snowmobile accident that claimed the life of an employee at one of his corporate worksites. The death of this employee gave him the opportunity to speak with a co-worker of the deceased, saying, “Boy isn't that sad? It really reminds you how temporary life is” (PID-a208). The co-worker responded in agreement and a door was opened to discuss where (s)he was in life.

While miraculous interventions were noted to occur by way of major life events, tragedies, and crises (e.g. deaths, heart attacks, child births, and divorce), they were also noted to occasionally occur through smaller life events and stressful situations (e.g. employee disputes, financial problems, fast approaching deadlines, and paper cuts). Nevertheless, regardless of the size of the miraculous intervention or the extent to which a door is opened, chaplains must wait for the moment when clients are ready and willing to take advantage of the benefits of the chaplain care program. “So, [they] wait. [They] pray and wait” (PID- c307) not just for the opportunity to attend to the services that they

are contracted to provide their corporate clients, but also to really fulfill “what [they]’re about” (PID-a208)- introducing the ‘love of God’ to those who do not know Him and assisting those who desire to have a closer relationship with Christ.

### **A Single Unified Goal**

Already, this analysis has provided a panoramic view and thick description of The Praying Field, including a discussion of 1) the role of corporate chaplains and the complexity of their work environment, 2) their process of establishing presence among clients and immediate family members, and 3) the effect of barriers within the workplace on the chaplain’s integration into corporate life. This section will conclude the analysis of chaplaincy’s definition and negotiation in corporate America, with a discussion of the common goal and identity shared among the chaplains of Chaplains Preferred.

Executives of Chaplains Preferred understand that corporate “[d]eadlines leave little time for caring about employee problems and their family needs” (MID-v101). In response, they train and place chaplains into client firms to provide services through an employee care program, assuring managers and supervisors that “[i]f you take care of your people, they will rally around the goals and objectives of your company, with deeper loyalty and higher productivity” (MID-v101). The purpose of chaplains’ placement by Chaplains Preferred into the corporate workplace is therefore, made simple and clear: to “Provide HELP, CARE, and SUPPORT All the Time” (MID-m117) through 1) chaplain care team activities, 2) pastoral care activities, 3) support activities, and 4) worksite relationships. However, the goal of their service is undetectable in the organizational



documents and presentation materials that are exchanged between chaplain care providers and client corporations.

While the unifying goal of offering chaplain services is undetectable in formal documents and presentation materials, participants were unhesitant to frankly discuss it during their interviews with the researcher. One division director stated that,

The goal of our organization first and foremost that is to get to the believer's organization. We do want to be share the gospel if, if the door is open so that we can. We also want to point folks to local churches so they can be a part of the fellowships as a part of our mission. The, but to do that our overriding mission as an organization shone through our chaplains is to care and love employees and be there for them every aspect of the day—365/24/7.

The “first and foremost” goal of Chaplains Preferred to “share the gospel” and “point folks to local churches” is clearly stated by the division director. Indeed, with the exception of one participant, all of the chaplains who were interviewed sought to fulfill a **single goal**: to share the ‘word and love of God’ with as many individuals within the organizational body of their client corporations as possible. While they did (and still do) desire to minister the ‘word and love of God’ with clients, each chaplain noted that they were quick to remind clients during start up meetings and weekly visits that “we’re not there to proselytize but if they open the door to faith we can sure talk with them, or we can answer their questions about faith” (PID-a208).

Chaplains Preferred “is based on a military model of chaplaincy in which it’s basically [the] ministry of walking” (PID-d103), yet the organization is never referred to as a ministry, neither in organizational documents or interactions with corporate clients.

Although, the chaplains who are contracted into the organization are recognized as ministers, the organization itself is recognized only as a nonprofit organization, and in some cases a faith-based nonprofit organization. Sharing insight on the goals of Chaplains Preferred, an area team manager in New York mentioned that,

... we would hope that each of our chaplains is able to at least bring one person to know Jesus Christ personally each month. And that's not necessarily a printed statement there, but I think that's something we often talk about. And that's only, only as kind of reminder that this is really what we're about. And it's not something like let's meet the goal of 1,000 converts this month because that would be disingenuous. On the other hand, we want each chaplain thinking about is there someone you brought to know Jesus Christ that may not have had that relationship in the past?  
(PID-a208)

This is only problematic to the extent that their written mission, which is shared with corporate clients and the general public, is to provide care and the underlying goal spoken among themselves is to spread Jesus, raising the question of whether the shared “evangelic” goal is the result of an organizational decision or the individual goals of its members.

As before mentioned, all but one of the interviewed chaplains were optimistic about the potential for their clients to participate in the chaplain care program and take advantage of the services that they offer. Even those who originally reject the presence of chaplaincy in the workplace are expected to become receptive within a year's time, or after a miraculous intervention. However, the perception of the pessimistic participant was that the “overall goal [of Chaplains Preferred] tend[ed] to be more evangelical” (PID-c206) than his personal aspirations as a corporate chaplain. Indeed, it would be

tempting to assume that his perception was accusatory of their goal being to proselytize, but this is not the case. What he meant was that the goal of all other chaplains of Chaplains Preferred was to **zealously** administer their services of care and attend to the essence of what they're about.

The truth is that they were all hired because of their ability to exude the 'love of God', their "knowledge of the Bible" (PID-v101), and their experience in ministry. Likewise, before entering the doors of their corporate worksite locations, they all prepare themselves by "spending some time in prayer." They "pray for the company, pray for the people... and ask God to show [them] who has a need" (PID-c102). The zeal of the optimists serves as a motivator to remain persistent and loyal to their purpose as corporate chaplains in the face of rejection, encouraging them to be more creative in approaching clients and willing to work to establish a presence among corporate clients. It was because of this zeal that the optimists did not distance themselves from contact with their clients by relegating themselves to the employee lounge, as did the pessimist.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary of Analysis**

In previous research, the traditional role of chaplains was reported to include providing prayer and consolation to patients and their families within hospitals and hospice programs (Sharp 1991, Simmonds 1994) and aiding in the rehabilitation and support of prison inmates (Sundt & Cullen 2002). The problem, however, is that despite the increase in empirical studies on medical and prison chaplaincy, no research has been conducted to explore any aspect of chaplaincy's inclusion in corporations. Likewise, the existing empirical studies on chaplaincy do not directly address the process through which the chaplain's role is defined and negotiated within their work environment. To address this absence of representation, this study sought to understand the meaning and purpose of corporate chaplaincy and identify the process through which chaplains are integrated into corporate life, with particular interest in the negotiation of individually and collectively assumed roles within the workplace.

To conduct this research, entrance was gained into a non-profit organization that is responsible for providing chaplains to corporation both large and small in the northeast region of the United States of America. Twenty-one interviews were conducted with 12 individuals employed by the chaplain providing organization (named Chaplains Preferred). Information gathered from these interviews was then supplemented with a

collection of archival data provided by research participants and other members of Chaplains Preferred, including a promotional video, brochures, letters of agreement, presentation notes, newsletter, and more (full list in Appendix B). All data were analyzed using the iterative constant comparison technique outlined in the grounded theory approach to data analysis. As a result of data analysis, this study expanded on previous conceptions of chaplaincy with three main findings: 1) the process of *establishing presence* with corporate clients and their immediate family members within their worksite locations is most important in the integration of chaplains into corporate life, 2) the primary reasons for negotiation of services were centered on the issues of worksite complexity and inconvenient structural worksite conditions, and 3) despite minimal contact, a collective identity was achieved through the chaplain's unification under the single shared goal of introducing the 'love of God' into the corporate.

Consistent with the traditional role of chaplains, the responsibilities of corporate chaplains ranged from offering prayer, encouragement, and transitory support, to providing referrals for specialized assistance (e.g. counseling, psychiatric, pastoral, etc.) and officiating religious ceremonies. An additional responsibility of corporate chaplains that is most prevalent in their daily activities, however, is their persistent effort to establish presence among corporate clients and their immediate family members. On the surface, the action on walking around, engaging in small talk, and distributing material on chaplain care services appears insignificant, but the chaplains know that establishing a presence of dependability and trustworthiness among the individuals positioned at their corporate worksite locations increases the likelihood of clients being comfortable with approaching a chaplain when they are in need of care. Without establishing a presence of

dependability, trustworthiness, and genuine friendliness, chaplains run the risk of seeming unapproachable and being underutilized.

The second main finding suggested that the primary reasons for the negotiation of services on the account of a client corporation were centered on the issues of worksite complexity and inconvenient structural worksite conditions. For the first of these, the chaplain's worksite was made complex by the extension of their service beyond their stationary corporate worksite locations to include temporary remote worksite locations (e.g. hospitals, prisons, funeral homes, etc.). Also influential in making the chaplain's worksite complex was the presence of individuals who varied in variations in religious affiliation and sentiments of faith, ranging from devoutly religious to non-religious and atheist. These sources of complexity challenged the chaplain's ability to establish presence and effectively provide services to corporate clients, leading to the creation of alternate means of service. Establishing themselves as a friend and resource available in times of need was met with an additional challenge: inconvenient structural floorplan of the worksite facilities- the second primary reason for the negotiation of services on the account of a client corporation

The third main finding of this study showed that despite minimal contact, a collective identity was achieved through the chaplain's unification under the single shared goal of introducing the 'love of God' into the corporate. It was indeterminable whether this evangelistic goal was adopted through the socialization and acculturation of new chaplains during their preliminary training or whether this was an individualized goal that was held before recruitment into Chaplains Preferred, simply proving to be a common characteristic of those who are chosen to serve as a corporate chaplain.

Regardless of the origin of this goal, it served as a mainstay and encouraging factor for chaplains in the face of rejection by corporate clients. Unfortunately, the goal of chaplaincy has not been addressed by an empirical study, especially not the ministerial goal of chaplaincy.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study offered preliminary insight on the role of chaplaincy in the corporate work environment and the integration process of both chaplaincy and religion in the corporate workplace. However, it exposed a fertile niche for future studies to advance on this understanding of corporate chaplaincy, and chaplaincy in general. The first suggestion for future research is to question the potential difference in the role and integration process of chaplains who are contracted into corporate worksite locations versus chaplains who are directly employed by corporations. This study was limited to the inclusion of only one type of corporate chaplain: chaplains who were contracted into corporations from an organization that stood independent of the corporate body. Although the source of chaplain employment is not addressed in the body of literature on chaplaincy, it is expected that the preparation for chaplaincy's inclusion and subsequent integration of chaplains into any workplace will differ.

The second suggestion for future research is to expand the sampling population to include individuals who are not chaplains, or affiliated with a chaplain providing organization. All studies of chaplaincy, including this one, are limited to the analysis of chaplain perceptions alone, neglecting the potentially diverse and enriching insight

offered through the perceptions of individuals who are not chaplains, but have had contact with chaplains or experience (both positive and negative) with chaplain care services. For example, while chaplains see the process of establishing presence in the corporate workplace as appropriate, necessary and friendly, corporate employees may see it as bothersome, especially those who identify themselves as either non-religious or atheist. As a result, this added perception may call into question the chaplain's approach to clients within the corporate worksite or the establishment of boundaries by the employee to their interaction with chaplains.

The final suggestions for future research is to take a comparative approach to the study of chaplaincy's role and integration into the workplace across multiple organization types (e.g. hospitals, prisons, military base, etc.). This suggestion was prompted by the very common response received in answer to requests for participants to describe what they do: "it's modeled after military chaplaincy." By using a comparative approach to the study of chaplaincy across organization types, the researcher can explore the extent to which chaplain responsibilities are similar and/or standardized. This expansion of research will not only benefit the understanding of corporate chaplaincy, but chaplaincy at large.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Questions Used For Probing Participants**

1. Why did you choose to become a chaplain? Why corporate chaplaincy? How did you hear about the position?

2. Tell me about corporate chaplaincy.

How do you define your role?

How do the organizations you serve see you? What mistakes do others make when considering or referring to your role as corporate chaplain

3. How does your current position differ from previous experiences as a chaplain? How is it similar?

Explain the difference between being a corporate chaplain and being a minister in other settings.

How do you differentiate your role from the role of a counselor?

4. What are your goals as chaplain? What do you hope to accomplish?

What goals would you expect other chaplains in this organization to have? How would their goals differ from yours?

5. Was there an orientation and training period for new chaplains when you joined this organization? If so, please explain the process.

Did you have a full understanding of what corporate chaplains do before applying? If not, how has your perception changed over time?

6. What preparation do you make before entering a new corporation as chaplain?

7. What usually happens during your first week in the new corporation? How have you been received by management and other staff members?

To what extent do you interact with the president, owner, or CEO of the corporations you serve? Likewise, to what extent do you interact with local management?

8. Explain a typical day at work. What services are most often requested of you?

9. What are the different reasons that corporations seek the service of corporate chaplains?

What concerns do clients and employees have when considering chaplain service?

10. As a corporate chaplain, what are you held accountable for in the corporations you serve?

Do you attend regular staff meetings at the corporation you serve? Do you attend other corporate events? Tell me about it.

What criticism have you received about your role as corporate chaplain?

11. Can you please describe the kinds of interactions you typically have with employees?

What kind of people do you encounter at each of your worksites?

When you approach a client, what consideration do you give to their religious background? How do you interact with those who don't agree with your presence in the workplace?

How do you build rapport with your clients? What things are most important to consider?

12. What do you do to prepare yourself before arriving to work? How do you prepare yourself to meet or approach clients? Are you normally aware of the client's need or situation? (Do you know what you're walking into?)

Do you wear a cleric? If not, what do you wear and why? How do clients address you?

13. Most companies develop an evaluation process to monitor the performance of their employees and maintain effective and efficient practices. What evaluation process is there in this organization? How do you feel about this evaluation process?

14. Please explain how you feel about your job (pros and cons).

What stresses are associated with your role?

What is most rewarding about your job? Are there any other rewards?

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

15. What skills are important to have as chaplains in the corporate sector?

16. What is the greatest lesson you've learned?

**Closing:** Is there anything else that you would like to mention, or add to our discussion?

What contact do you have with other corporate chaplains? Are you a member of a professional association for chaplains or ministers? If so, can you describe how this affects your work?

## Appendix B

### List of Analyzed Non-technical Literature (i.e. Archival Data)

<u><i>MID*</i></u>	<u>Item Description</u>
<i>v101</i>	Informational (or promotional) video on Chaplains Preferred, including testimonials, news broadcasting clip, and discussion of the need for, benefits of, and services provided through the chaplain care program
<i>a102</i>	Newspaper article on the increased presence of chaplains in the workplace
<i>b103</i>	Brochure summarizing chaplain care program, including a bulleted list of services, testimonials from corporate executives, and words from the founder of Chaplains Preferred
<i>b204</i>	Employee targeted brochure on the chaplain care team, including specifics on what chaplain will and will <u>NOT</u> do, and a list of suggestions on how to interact with the chaplain care team
<i>b305</i>	Employee targeted brochure to introduce the chaplain care program and discuss the need for, benefits of, and services provided through the chaplain care program
<i>c106</i>	Business card designed and distributed by Chaplains Preferred
<i>c207</i>	Business card designed and distributed by Chaplains Preferred
<i>c308</i>	Business card designed and distributed by corporate client for contracted chaplains, including a reminder of chaplain services



- c409* Business card designed and distributed by corporate client for contracted chaplains
- c510* Business card designed and distributed by corporate client for contracted chaplains, including a reminder of chaplain services
- c611* Business card designed and distributed by Chaplains Preferred
- c712* Business card designed and distributed by corporate client for contracted chaplains
- f113* Letter of agreement between Chaplains Preferred and client corporate client on contracted services, including terms and cost of service
- f214* Form collecting information on employee demographics of corporate clients, requesting information on employees race and sex
- f315* Start-up procedures for corporate clients to establish the chaplain care program
- f416* Information sheet on the chaplain care program for corporate client employees, including a list of services, the terms of service, and contact information of all chaplain team members
- m117* Power point presentation for start-up meetings and corporate introductions to the chaplain care program and chaplain care team
- n118* Newsletter produced by client corporation, featuring a column authored by the site team manager
- p119* Pamphlet with one testimonial and three months of daily devotions
- p220* Promotional pamphlet addressed to potential corporate clients
- r121* General letter of information about Chaplains Preferred

- r201*** Profile letter about the founder of Chaplains Preferred
- r322*** Sample trimester report of chaplain activities
- r423*** Sample introductory letter to corporate client employees

*\* Material Identification Number*