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NEW AIR FORCE CHAPLAINS

AND COUNSELING PREPAREDNESS:

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE AS A CASE STUDY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

DR. SEAN LUCAS, FACULTY ADVISOR

BY

ROBERT W. WIDO JR.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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Faculty Advisor Sean Michael Poon
Second Faculty Reader Daniel M. Zuke
Director of D.Min. Program Richard L. Eri
Director of the Library James C. Takala

**A STUDY OF THE PREPARATION OF NEW ACCESSION
AIR FORCE CHAPLAINS TO DO THE KINDS AND
THE AMOUNT OF COUNSELING THAT IS ASKED OF THEM**

By

Robert William Wido, Jr.

Doctor of Ministry

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Project director: Dr. Sean Lucas

The problem addressed in this project concerned the educational preparation of new accession Air Force chaplains. The literature review focused on the education of seminary students in the area of pastoral counseling. In addition, the literature review delved into the subjects of defining pastoral counseling and how pastoral counseling, as a subset of a military chaplain's ministry, provides for the overall spiritual health and well being of the military community.

The question of chaplains' preparation was addressed through a focus group of five new accession Air Force chaplains. Through the use of carefully scripted focus questions, the conversation centered on seminary preparation, continuing professional education, and expectations of the counselors and the counselees.

As a result of the focus group discussion, it was determined that the chaplains who were studied had a wide range of preparation. Some had almost no appropriate education, while others had very appropriate preparation. However, it was further

discovered that all the chaplains, regardless of their preparation level, struggled to find their identities as pastoral counselors in the military culture.

In the end, five themes emerged, bringing this study to a logical and profitable conclusion. First, these chaplains experienced general ministry frustration. Second, there was confusion over the policy of confidentiality. Third, these chaplains faced significant challenges in the area of religious accommodation. Fourth, there was a pervading sense that these pastors were not adequately prepared for the task they were being called to perform. And lastly, these chaplains expressed joy and excitement at the opportunities they were being afforded in the United States military.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every week, the gates of Lackland Air Force Base (LAFB) are jammed with parents coming to the graduation parade. Their sons and daughters would have left home six weeks earlier, and, except for a brief “I made it here okay” phone call the first week, they will not have heard from their children until the graduation day parade. Every Friday morning at 0900, nearly one thousand new airmen march before the grandstands and take an oath of office, pledging to defend their country from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

From my office at LAFB, I can almost hear the Friday morning parade. I see the young trainees every day, marching, saluting, and struggling through the toughest six weeks of their lives.

Not only do I see them from afar, but as a member of the chapel’s leadership team, I am charged with providing for their pastoral needs. This includes worship, visitation and, of course, counseling. And although I do not do one-on-one counseling with the trainees, I am charged, in part, with training the chaplains who do provide that counseling.

The ministry of an Air Force chaplain is largely dependant on an ability to counsel effectively. Commanders look to their chaplains to be the on-site expert in matters of the heart and soul.

The United States Air Force maintains strict requirements for admission as a chaplain. "Selection for chaplains is both competitive and based on the needs of the Air Force. The basic requirements for the Air Force Chaplain Service include:

- Ecclesiastical endorsement from a Department of Defense recognized endorser
- Minimum two years religious leadership experience
- United States citizenship
- Baccalaureate degree (not less than 120 semester hours)
- Master's degree in Theology or related subjects (not less than seventy-two semester hours)
- Must enter active duty prior to forty years of age* (Some exceptions for prior military service apply.)
- Commissioned officers must be in the grade of captain (O-3) and below.
- Pass commissioning physical and background security investigation
- Ability to work in Department of Defense-directed religious accommodation environment, supporting the free exercise of religion for all military personnel and their dependents"¹

From this rather extensive list of requirements, it should be obvious that becoming an Air Force chaplain (AFC) is a difficult endeavor. All AFCs are required to be recognized by a major religious denomination, generally by ordination. All AFCs must possess a Master's degree, typically a Master of Divinity degree. And all AFCs must meet certain physical and security criterion. These criteria, however, do not guarantee

¹ *Us Air Force Chaplain Service Web Site*, [Web Site] (2004, accessed 6 Oct 04 2004); available from <http://www.usafhc.af.mil/>.

that the newly assessed AFC is a capable or trained pastoral counselor. The Association of Theological Schools lays out broad parameters defining a “good theological education,” but does not recommend a specified number of hours for training in counseling. Because the decision about a particular chaplain’s preparedness (including preparedness to counsel) rests mostly with his or her denomination, preparation for the rigors of counseling military professionals varies from chaplain to chaplain.

Statement of the Purpose

This study will confine itself to the chaplains assigned to Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Currently, twenty-one chaplains are assigned to Lackland Air Force Base. The rank structure of the staff is as follows:

| Number | Pay Grade (Rank) | Category |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | O6 (colonel) | FIELD GRADE OFFICERS |
| 1 | O5 (lieutenant colonel) | |
| 5 | O4 (major) | |
| 13 | O3 (captain) | COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS |
| 1 | O2 (1 st lieutenant) | |

This study will focus entirely on the preparedness of the 1st lieutenant and captain chaplains who are currently in their first-duty assignment. I am studying Company Grade Air Force chaplains because I want to find out how much formal training they have in the area of counseling in order to understand how the Air Force can provide meaningful continuing counseling education. The purpose of this study is to examine how prepared first-term Company Grade Air Force chaplains are for the counseling ministry that they confront in their assignments at Lackland Air Force Base.

Definition of Terms

Acronyms are a part of military culture. For the purpose of this dissertation, the following acronyms will be used:

AFB- (as in Lackland AFB or Scott AFB)- Air Force Base

AFC- Air Force chaplain

HC- Headquarters Chapel

JAG- Judge Advocate General- the Air Force legal profession

USAF- United States Air Force

Field Grade Officer- for the purpose of this study, a colonel, lieutenant colonel, or a major

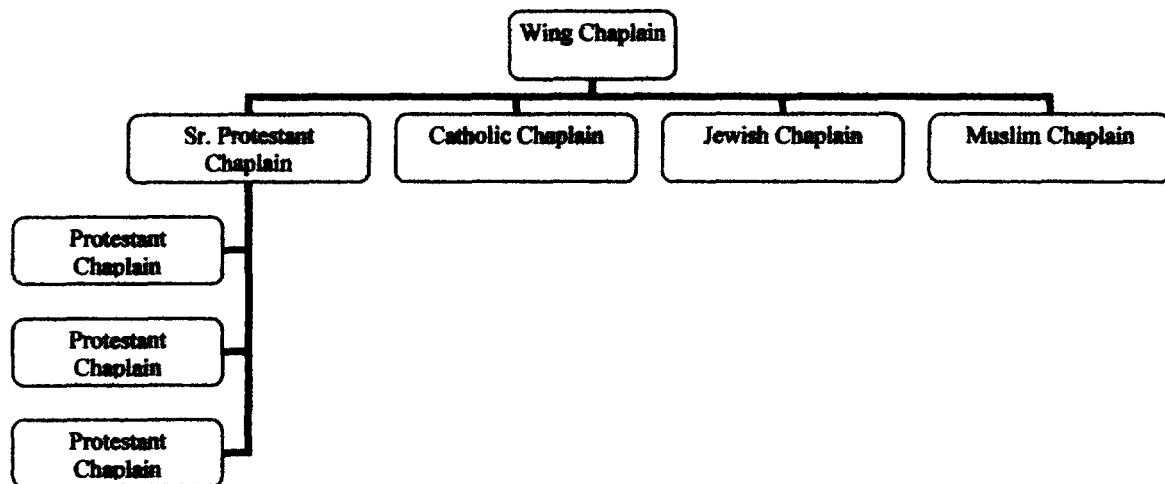
A Company Grade Officer- a military officer with the rank of 2nd lieutenant, 1st lieutenant or captain. Chaplains typically enter the Air Force with the rank of 1st lieutenant and are promoted to captain after two years of successful service. There are no 2nd lieutenant Air Force chaplains.

Wing Chaplain- the most senior chaplain supervising several other chaplains. Under the Wing chaplain are the **Senior Catholic chaplain** and the **Senior Protestant chaplain**.

Normally, all the Christian chaplains on a given staff, who are not the Wing Chaplain, or the Senior Catholic or Senior Protestant chaplain, fall under either the Senior Catholic or the Senior Protestant chaplain. Both senior chaplains are accountable to the Wing Chaplain.

Normally, due to the shortage of Catholic priests, only one Catholic chaplain serves on a staff. Due to the lower numbers of both Jewish and Muslim troops, Muslim and Jewish chaplains are rather rare in the modern Air Force. As a matter of fact, as of November 2004, ten Jewish and two Muslim chaplains serve on active duty for the roughly 374,000 members of the USAF.

A typical organization chart would, therefore, look like this:



New accession- A chaplain who recently entered active duty service. Since the Air Force requires a "minimum two years religious leadership experience,"² it can be assumed that someone coming on to active duty, a "new accession," will have a minimum of two years of experience in some form of religious leadership. It should be noted, however, that this requirement can be waived under certain conditions.

² Ibid.

Core Competency- those tasks that are foundational to the Air Force community.

Currently, the core competencies of the Air Force Chaplaincy are integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

The Air Force Chaplain Institute- a school located at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama. The Chaplain Institute's mission is to "provide education, training and resources that promote professional excellence and enhance the free exercise of religion for the USAF family."³

Pastoral Counseling- an activity best defined by Howard Clinebell as: "the utilization, by a minister, of a one-to-one or small group relationship to help people handle their problems of living more adequately and grow toward fulfilling their potentialities."⁴ For the purpose of this paper we will define pastoral counseling as: *The act of entering into relationship with another person for the purpose of helping that other person develop ways to take responsibility for their own life and actions and to grow to be a more committed, mature Christian.*

Significance of the Study

Precious little research exists in the area of chaplain preparation, and the available information is dated. Searching for Doctor of Ministry dissertations using the Research in Ministry (RIM) database, one finds over sixty dissertations under "Military Chaplains." However, only four studies appear when cross-referenced with "Clergy-Continuing Education." Of these four, three were written in the 1980s, and one was written in 1999. The last dissertation that I was able to find that dealt specifically with

³ Chief of Air Force Chaplain's Web Site, (accessed); available from <http://www.usafhc.af.mil/>.

⁴ Howard J. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), p. 20.

new AFCs was written in 1986. The new chaplains assessed in that study are now at retirement age. A new study is clearly warranted.

In addition, this study will be important for the impetus it will give for the continuing education of AFCs. The continuing education requirements for chaplains ministering in the US Air Force are in a constant state of flux. The curriculum at the Air Force Chaplain Institute is changed annually to meet the continuing needs of the Air Force community. A study such as this could be very helpful to the Air Force as a whole and to the Air Force Chaplaincy in particular.

Not only will this study help the Air Force, but it hopefully will help new chaplains who may wonder if they are the only ones in the entire military structure who feel inadequate for the task that God has called them to perform. I anticipate that I will find that there are many chaplains currently on active duty who feel that their seminary education did not prepare them well. I also believe that many chaplains will tell me that they wished now that they had been advised to concentrate on counseling while they were in seminary.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many books have been written addressing the subject of counseling. A quick search of any internet bookstore yields thousands of titles. It seems from first glance like a person easily could spend his or her entire life reading books about counseling and pastoral counseling. However, finding resources that address pastoral counseling in the context of military ministry is far more difficult. Many of the titles listed are either non-scholarly, poorly written, or simply heretical.

There are, however, several resources that helpfully address this topic. One is the classic work on military ministry entitled *The Churches and the Chaplaincy*.⁵ written by Richard Hutcheson, a retired Navy chaplain. Though dated, the work provides a theological and biblical foundation for the study of the military chaplaincy. Another helpful book is Donald Hadley and Gerald Richards' book, *Ministry with the Military*.⁶ This book is written for those who work directly with active duty military members. While this book is an excellent resource, one significant drawback is that it is directed to the parish pastor who has military members in his or her congregation, not to the professional military chaplain. Another resource that is valuable is "Lifetime Development of Clergy"⁷, a journal article by Winston Gooden. Though a journal article, it is well-researched and inspirational. Gooden argues that education cannot end with a diploma—the clergyman must commit himself to a lifetime of study.

⁵ Richard Hutcheson, *The Churches and the Chaplaincy* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1975).

⁶ Donald W. & Gerald T. Richards Hadley, *Ministry with the Military* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992).

⁷ Winston E Gooden, "Lifetime Development of Clergy," *Clergy Assessment and Career Development* (1990).

Two dissertation, though somewhat dated, proved helpful for this project. Gene McIntosh wrote an excellent Doctor of Ministry dissertation for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in 1986 on "Supervised Ministry for New, Active Duty Chaplains in the United States Air Force."⁸ McIntosh, an active duty Air Force Chaplain, looks deeply at some of the same issues that I endeavored to address in this dissertation. His work was very helpful and insightful. Another helpful dissertation was Jeffery Guild's fine work, "The United States Air Force: 'A Great Way of Life!'"⁹ His project involved the development of a counseling program in Korea, making extensive use of group counseling for people facing similar issues. He found that service members were more prone to continue counseling if they were involved in a group setting. The premise of his study is that service members who face various struggles find comfort and help when they realize that their situation is not unique.

Books about counseling occupy a large shelf at the local bookstore. Whether the subject is Freudian psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy, or Jungian analysis, it seems the shelves are literally bristling with books purported to be the last word on the subject. But the area of pastoral counseling is a slender subset of the counseling world. Indeed, in many ways, the subject of pastoral counseling is an area relatively unstudied and unexplored by most writers. A search of online bookstores produced the names of over 51,000 books on "counseling", while "pastoral counseling" produced only four titles! A search for "Christian counseling" produced three titles in October 2004.

⁸ Gene K. McIntosh, "Supervised Ministry for New, Active Duty Chaplains in the United States Air Force" (DMin, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986).

⁹ Jeffery Guild, *The United States Air Force: "a Great Way of Life!"* Theology (San Antonio: Oblate School of Theology, 1999).

This lack of study has led Howard Clinebell, the author of one of the classic textbooks on pastoral counseling, to say, "If the pastoral counseling renaissance is to become the powerful force for renewal which it can become, certain decisive changes must occur. Pastoral counseling must come of age in both theory and practice."¹⁰

However, the study of pastoral counseling must be commenced carefully and systematically, lest one's biases and prejudices affect one's outlook. Therefore, it is the intention of this literature review to lead to an understanding of pastoral counseling--its history, its definition, and its distinctive traits. Then, we will discuss training of pastoral counselors. Lastly, we shall endeavor to apply these principles to the area of my particular interest--the military chaplaincy.

Understanding Pastoral Counseling

Richard Carter, an associate professor of counselor education at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma, makes a strong case that Christian counseling as a specialty is emerging as an entity in the counseling landscape of America.¹¹ He points out that many people are reticent to go to a counselor that they may not be able to trust. Even a qualified secular counselor might approach issues of family and marriage from a perspective that many would find uncomfortable. He says,

These clients perceive that a Christian counselor will be more understanding of their belief system and more accepting of them as individuals. As a result, a branch of professional counseling known as Christian counseling has emerged.¹²

Other research seems to back up Carter's assertion that people are often drawn to Christian, or pastoral, counselors. In an effort to gauge popular support for their proposal

¹⁰ Clinebell, p. 16.

¹¹ Richard B. Carter, "Christian Counseling: An Emerging Specialty," *Counseling and Values* 43, no. 3 (1999): p. 2.

¹² Ibid.: p. 1.

that pastoral counselors be included in the roster of Medicare approved providers, The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) along with the Samaritan Institute commissioned a research project in the fall of 2000. In the survey, they found that an overwhelming number of Americans recognize the close link between spiritual faith, religious values, and mental health. They further found that many people would prefer to seek assistance from a mental health professional who recognizes and values the place of spiritual values in the course of counseling treatment.¹³

In their survey, the AAPC made some startling discoveries:

- 83 percent of those surveyed felt that spiritual faith and religious beliefs are closely tied to their state of mental and emotional health.
- 75 percent of respondents said that it is important to see a professional counselor who integrates their values and beliefs into the counseling process.
- 69 percent responded that it would be important to seek a professional counselor who represented spiritual values and beliefs if they had a serious problem that required counseling.
- 77 percent said it would be important for an elderly parent or relative, who was in need of treatment, to get assistance from a mental health professional who knew and understood their spiritual beliefs and values.
- 29 percent of respondents said they would go to discuss a personal problem with a pastoral counselor or others with religious training. This was the highest percentage of all the options offered.

¹³ *Survey Findings*, [URL] (2000, accessed); available from <http://www.aapc.org/survey.htm>.

These statistics led the AAPC and the Samaritan Institute to conclude that a clear link exists between the strength of one's spiritual faith and the status of one's mental health.¹⁴

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) studied counselors and those who sought counseling. Researchers discovered that members of the clergy are just as likely as any other counselors to have a mentally-distressed person seek them out for care. Despite the perception by some counselors that pastoral counselors lack training, clergy act as *de facto* marriage and family counselors for millions of Americans.¹⁵

More helpful information comes from The Milwaukee Foundation, which sponsored a training program for 127 clergy persons in 1985. The eighteen-month program was designed to give clergy some basic counseling training. In writing up this study, the authors, Carter, Gallope, and Bushman, noted that priests, ministers, and rabbis are often the first to be contacted by a person experiencing a marital problem.¹⁶

Regardless of the level of training, virtually all clergy can expect to be asked for counseling help in the ordinary course of their duties.¹⁷ Members of the clergy can anticipate being contacted, at some time in their careers, by a person who expects the clergyperson to be a qualified, compassionate counselor.

¹⁴ Ibid.(accessed).

¹⁵ Andrew J. Weaver, Harold G. Koenig & David B. Larson, "Marriage and Family Therapists and the Clergy: A Need for Clinical Collaboration, Training and Research," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 23, no. 1 (1997): p. 13.

¹⁶ Ross E. Carter, Gallope, Raymond A. & Bushman, Gregory A., "Training Clergy in Marital Counseling," *The Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 20, no. 2 (1985): p. 86.

¹⁷ George Jr. Brown, "Lifelong Learning and Ministry," *Reformed Review* 50, no. 3 (1997), Earl E. & Sunderland Shelp, Ronald H., ed., *The Pastor as Counselor*, ed. Earl R. & Sunderland Shelp, Ronald H., Pastoral Ministry Series (New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), p. 16.

If, as the evidence seems to indicate, clergy are often the first people called in to counsel in a crisis, then it makes sense that a well-developed science of pastoral counseling needs to become part of the American counseling landscape.

A History of Pastoral Counseling

According to the eminent counseling duo of Paul Meier and Frank Minirth, the modern subject of psychiatry traces its roots back to Johann Christian August Heinroth (1773-1843). Heinroth, a Christian pioneer in the field of psychiatry, published books and scholarly papers in Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century. He was the psychiatrist who coined the word “psychosomatic” to describe the relationship between spiritual and psychological conflicts and their relationship to physical illness.¹⁸

Heinroth determined from Paul’s writings that Paul was teaching that human personality can be divided into three parts. First is the conscience--the thinking, moral part of the human mind. Next is the “ego”--where the mind, the emotions, and the will reside. And lastly is the *Fleisch*--German, meaning, roughly, the basic drives, including our sinful nature. Heinroth saw these three divisions in Romans 7:14-25:

For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I [would] like to [do,] but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish [to do], I agree with the Law, [confessing] that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good [is] not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the

¹⁸ Paul D. Meier, Minirth, Frank B., Wichern, Frank B. & Ratcliff, Donald E., *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), p. 36.

law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!¹⁹

Heinroth's work, however, did not start a pastoral counseling revolution. That revolution did not come until much later. Actually, what we think of today as pastoral counseling is a relatively recent phenomenon.²⁰

Some date pastoral counseling to the early part of the twentieth century. Holifield, who wrote *The History of Pastoral Care in America*, for example, saw pastoral care developing its identity in New England, where pastors first began to consider how they might use some of the new research in human psychology in their ministries.²¹

The Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) movement was founded in 1923. CPE is a program that trains pastors to work in an institutional setting. It started with one teacher and a few students.²² By the 1960s, the movement had spread to seventy centers with six hundred students. Today many hospitals and every branch of the military have a CPE program. Each year, the USAF trains several students in a CPE program at Wilford Hall in San Antonio, Texas. CPE has also become mainstream in the colleges and seminaries of America.

Ironically, the most horrible chapter in the history of the twentieth century was also the time when pastoral education came the farthest, in terms of finding a place in the makeup of American counseling. Many churches were unprepared for the huge influx of

¹⁹ Romans 7:14-25 NASB

²⁰ David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 13.

²¹ E. B. Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 238.

²² Frank C. Peters, "Counseling and Pastoral Training," *Bibliotheca sacra* (1969): p. 294.

psychological problems that would confront them after World War II. As Lynette Schwarz Danylchuk point out:

During and after World War II, chaplains were confronted with psychological and theological trauma of overwhelming proportions. They went to their denominations and seminaries seeking and obtaining the training they needed to deal with the massive human tragedy. Over the years since World War II, a small but growing number of ministers have been developing a high level of expertise in mastering and integrating the disciplines of psychology and theology.²³

Pastoral counseling made the transition from the battlefield to the home front after the war. The pastors/chaplains who ministered so effectively in battle found themselves better able to minister in their churches, in the hospitals, and prisons in their communities.

A Biblical Basis for Pastoral Counseling

Before the Church embarks on any ministry, that ministry must first be established in scripture. For a ministry to be truly appropriate and honoring to God, we must determine if He has ordained the ministry, corporately and particularly, to the congregation. If a task has no basis in scripture and no precedent in the Word, then it is discarded.

Several authors have written about the biblical appropriateness of pastoral counseling. Earl E. Shelp and Ronald H. Sunderland have co-authored a book entitled *The Pastor as Counselor*. This book lays out a clear and compelling case for the pastor as pastoral counselor. The authors assert that the Bible teaches that wisdom is one of the

²³ Lynette Schwarz PhD. Danylchuck, "The Pastoral Counselor as Mental Health Professional: A Comparison of the Training of Aapc Fellow Pastoral Counselors and Licensed Clinical Social Workers," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 46, no. 4 (1992): p. 382.

many familiar characteristics of a godly man or woman. In fact, they go so far as to define wisdom as the art of living.

Proverbs is filled with advisements to heed the counsel of the wise and to strive for wisdom. From these verses Shelp and Sunderland conclude that the pastor should endeavor to be a wise person who is able to impart wisdom to those who seek it.²⁴ The authors make the case that pastoral counseling is deeply tied to this idea of wisdom.

They make three points in their discussion of Wisdom literature:

1. The wisdom of the scriptures not only holds to a view of life that is unfailingly real, it points to an understanding of human growth that places emphasis on the capacity of a person to stand on his or her own.
2. The wisdom of scripture presents us with a view of life that emphasizes moral integrity and personal righteousness, established and rooted in the righteousness and holiness of God. (I Peter 1:16 says, “Be holy, for I am Holy”.)²⁵
3. The practical, day-to-day living out of life is the main concern of the Wisdom literature. In the scriptures we see God, holy and untouchable, communicating with man in practical terms. Scripture tells us how to live a life pleasing to God, and also how to get along with one’s neighbor.

The point that Shelp and Sunderland are making is simple: if God established certain principles in His Word to instruct His people how to live righteous and holy lives, and if the pastor is called to be a proclaimer of the Word, then knowing about wisdom and its applicability to daily life would seem to be imperative.

Shelp and Sunderland go further, making the case that counseling is really a form of spiritual direction. Quoting an unpublished address by Gerald May, the authors contend that “psychotherapy is interested primarily in self-understanding, pastoral

²⁴ Earl E. Shelp, ed., p. 14.

²⁵ I Peter 1:16 NASB

counseling in self-determination, and spiritual direction in self-surrender to the discerned will of God.”²⁶

Not everyone agrees with Shelp and Sunderland. For example, Gary Collins in his classic text *Christian Counseling* makes the case that the pastor should be a faith community’s leader, committed to helping people find their way in the world. Collins contends that the pastor’s calling as a counselor is rooted in his or her position as the leader of a congregation, and it is in the context of the congregation that real healing can take place.²⁷

Of course, it would be wrong to assume that Collins does not understand or appreciate the importance of wisdom in scripture or that Shelp and Sunderland are blind to the importance of community in living the Christian life. But they emphasize differing roles in ministry.

Another difference between the authors has to do with the purpose of counseling. For Shelp and Sunderland, counseling is about wisdom. It is about helping people come to understand their problems in the context of living a wisdom-filled life.²⁸ Collins sees a twin purpose in counseling: to teach and to evangelize.²⁹

This difference can be viewed in day-to-day counseling when we examine how it affects the pastoral counsel. For example, in the area of premarital counseling, some pastors see an opportunity to evangelize, while others see an opportunity to impart wisdom to a young couple about to embark on the great adventure of marriage. Both sets of pastors are presented with the same issue, but they take different approaches to it.

²⁶ Shelp, ed., p. 15

²⁷ Gary R. Ph.D. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1980), pgs 17-18.

²⁸ Shelp, ed., p. 18.

²⁹ Collins, p. 17.

Collins talks about pastoral counseling and points out that Jesus makes use of varying counseling models.

At times he listened to people carefully and without giving much overt direction, but on other occasions he taught decisively. He encouraged and supported but he also confronted and challenged. He accepted people who were sinful and needy, but he also demanded repentance, obedience and action.³⁰

How do we understand the biblical injunction to help one another, to bear one another's burdens, and to fulfill the law of Christ? (Galatians 6:2) Does the Bible really tell us that we, as pastors, should counsel others? And if we did counsel others, what should be our goal? How would we know when we have achieved our goal? In order to answer this question, we must move into our next section: a definition of pastoral counseling.

Towards a Definition of Pastoral Counseling

Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary defines counseling as "advice given, especially as the result of consultation." This definition might serve as a springboard to understanding counseling and, more specifically, pastoral counseling. The dictionary writers point out two important things about counseling. First, it involves advice. Although some counseling models encourage the counselor to avoid giving advice, ultimately, the counselees come to the counselor because they do not know what to do about their problems, and they are seeking help. Second, the dictionary points out that this advice is given as the result of consultation. If counseling is anything at all, it is the consultation of one person with another. Though criticized by some, the "medical model" of counseling, in which a counselee consults with a professional individual (be it

³⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or a therapist) in order to come up with a diagnosis, is systemic to the idea of counseling. It is the most widely accepted model.

While Webster's Dictionary does not define pastoral counseling, other sources offer various definitions. David G. Benner defines pastoral counseling as

...the establishment of a time-limited relationship that is structured to provide comfort for troubled persons by enhancing their awareness of God's grace and faithful presence and thereby increasing their ability to live their lives more fully in the light of these realizations.³¹

This definition is commendable. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that it is time-limited, that it is structured, that it provides comfort, and that comfort is found in an enhanced awareness of God's presence and grace.

Clinebell would disagree with Benner's definition of pastoral counseling. For Clinebell, pastoral counseling involves reconciliation. Counseling is an instrument for renewing a person through the reconciliation of that person and those from whom he or she feels estranged. This estrangement might involve families, fellow church members, those outside the church, or even the counselees themselves.³²

Some define pastoral counseling in much broader terms. For example, in an article about pastoral counseling, *The Harvard Mental Health Letter* define pastoral counselors as those persons who have training in both theology and psychology and who use both disciplines to come to understand their clients. The article describes pastoral counseling as a form of psychotherapy.

Most pastoral counselors believe there is a God or divine power in whose image we are created. They believe that we yearn for a transforming connection with the divine and that psychotherapy can mediate the loving and healing nature of being itself. Some

³¹ Benner, p. 17.

³² Clinebell, p. 20.

AAPC members believe in a therapeutic role for spiritual values but not in a divine being. Pastoral counselors may also make therapeutic use of traditional religious resources such as prayer, Scripture reading, and participation in the worship and community life of a congregation. They often pay special attention to the religious history of the client and the client's family, noting how it may contribute either to the pathology or to the resources needed for coping.³³

Another definition of pastoral counseling comes from Chaplain A. H. Childs, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. For Dr. Childs, pastoral counseling has two primary goals. First, counseling should help people learn to help themselves. Second, pastoral counseling should act as a learning tool to help persons come to a fuller and richer theological understanding of human nature.³⁴

In the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, John Patton defines pastoral counseling as:

...a specialized type of pastoral care offered in response to individuals, couples, or families who are experiencing and able to articulate the pain in their lives and willing to seek pastoral help in order to deal with it. A pastoral counselor is a person with commitment to and education for religious ministry who is functioning in an appropriate setting for ministry and accountable to a recognized religious community. [P]astoral counseling uses both psychological and theological resources to deepen its understanding of the pastoral relationship.³⁵

Larry Crabb, long an icon in the area of pastoral counseling, has a rather simple understanding of the complex act of counseling. For Crabb, counseling is simply an

³³ David G. Benner, "What Is Pastoral Counseling?," *Harvard Mental Health Letter* 13, no. 11 (1997): p. 8.

³⁴ Brian H. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 21.

³⁵ John Patton, *Pastoral Counseling: A Ministry of the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983).

exhortation to confess, repent, and change.³⁶ In his view, all counseling involves helping people come to grips with the sinful actions in their lives. In order for people to gain victory over a sin in their life, he writes, they must make a firm decision not to sin.

This definition of counseling has a lot to do with Crabb's understanding of human nature. Crabb holds to the theological belief that a human is sinful from his or her inception. Since we are born in sin (Psalm 51:5), counseling cannot commence until we come to grips with our sin, repent of it, and make a firm decision not to sin again.

He points out that how a person thinks has a great deal to do with how a person acts and feels. In this regard, there appears to be common ground between Crabb and the cognitive behavioral school of thought.

Since the referenced text was published in 1975 and is therefore over two decades old, it is important to note that Crabb has changed in his understanding of pastoral counseling over the years. This book, however, illustrates- that there are various understandings of just what pastoral counseling involves.

When one thinks of counseling, one imagines an interaction taking place between one person (the counselor) and another (the counselee). But some have seen counseling in broader terms. For example, a fellow Air Force chaplain, Jeffery Guild, wrote a dissertation detailing a counseling technique he perfected while stationed at Osan Air Base in Korea. In Chaplain Guild's model, counseling takes place, not just as a one-on-one conversation with a chaplain, but also in the context of a group.

Distinct from education in a group setting, group counseling has as its primary objective behavior change and skill acquisition, not content learning. It is experiential, interactive and didactic.³⁷

³⁶ Lawrence J. Crabb, *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1975).

³⁷ Guild, pages unnumbered.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I have defined pastoral counseling as follows:

The act of entering into relationship with another person for the purpose of helping that other person develop ways to take responsibility for his or her own life and actions and to grow to be a more committed, mature Christian.

This definition has several key words embedded in it, which gives it meaning and depth. These words include the following: act (actions), relationship, purpose, develop, responsibility, grow (growth), committed, mature, and Christian. These words are at the core of my philosophy of counseling, which focuses on the counselee's Christian growth.

The Goal of Pastoral Counseling

A definition of counseling, and a definition of pastoral counseling in particular, is closely tied to the goal of counseling. What exactly should a counselor be trying to do in the life and experience of a counselee?

Writers have postulated many different goals for counselors. Carl Rogers, one of the most influential psychologists in American history, has written fairly extensively on the goals of counseling. For Rogers, successful counseling helps counselees move from artificiality to authenticity, from dependence to independence, and from distrust to tolerance. He has experience with counseling hundreds of troubled persons and has created a list of things after which people universally strive.

- * People are naturally drawn away from facade in life.
- * People naturally move away from artificial "oughts" in which they do not personally believe.
- * People are naturally inclined away from meeting expectations.
- * People naturally move away from pleasing others.

- * People are motivated to that which pleases themselves.
- * People are normally moving toward being in the process of change.
- * People want to move toward greater complexity and openness to experience.
- * People are generally drawn toward accepting others.
- * People want to move toward greater trust of themselves.³⁸

Rogers, who was arguably one of the greatest influences in the modern world of counseling, gave us a unique opportunity to look into his view of the world and of counseling, and what we see is a counseling system that encourages people to move toward being more autonomous, more self-directed. His landmark book, *On Becoming a Person*, is clearly well-titled.

Other counselors take similar, but decidedly different, approaches to the goal of counseling. Richard Johnson and Liza Conyers in their humorous, yet applicable, article entitled "Surviving the Doctoral Dissertation: a Solution-Focused Approach," picture success in counseling as the counselee's mere survival during a difficult and precarious period of his or her life. In their article, they "describe the use of a solution-focused support group as one means of aiding dissertators in overcoming obstacles in their work."³⁹

Rogers and the team of Johnson/Conyers differ on this very important point: for Rogers, the process is the goal, but for the solution-focused duo, the end is the goal. In other words, Rogers would say that the act of learning and growing constitutes the end of

³⁸ Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 3 ed. (New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995), pgs 167-175.

³⁹ Richard W. Johnson & Liza M. Conyers, "Surviving the Doctoral Dissertation: A Solution-Focused Approach," *Journal of College Counseling* 4, no. 1 (2001): p. 77.

counseling, but Johnson/Conyers would say that overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal (graduation) is the measure of success.⁴⁰

The Johnson/Conyers support group is behavioral in its approach.

Johnson/Conyers' methodology is solution-focused. Success for the Johnson/Conyers team is something measurable, rather than something intrinsic.

The differences between Rogers and Johnson/Conyers illustrate a significant divide among the various counseling models? Many see success as something measurable (cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused), and many see the goal as being insight (family systems, psychodynamic, experiential).

John Gottman, perhaps today's leading proponent of the behavioral model of counseling therapy, makes some very strong assertions in his book *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*. For example, he says: "If there is one lesson I have learned from my years of research, it is that a lasting marriage results from a couple's ability to resolve the conflicts that are inevitable in any relationship".⁴¹ Gottman clearly believes that the ultimate goal of counseling, and of a happy marriage, is a change in behavior.

On the other hand, many counselors would argue that the ultimate way to change people is by changing their thinking—their understanding of themselves and their situation. Some would argue that change in behavior without change in thinking is doomed to be short-lived. It was Clinebell who said, "[T]he emphasis on insight represents a giant advance over the advice-giving or mere problem-solving approach to counseling".⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid.: p. 78.

⁴¹ John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Firsides, 1995), p. 28.

⁴² Clinebell, p. 31.

Most counselors, however, and certainly the author of this dissertation, would argue that insight and action are both important. Seward Hiltner's has stated, "The generic aim of counseling is new insight, with proof in action".⁴³ This is typical of the mainstream of pastoral counseling theory.

In a study conducted in 1989 by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 250 randomly assigned patients from four different treatment groups were examined. The goal of the examination was to compare and contrast the effects of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT). Since both of these treatments have been shown to be effective in counseling depressed persons, it was an ideal opportunity to see what difference, if any, could be discerned in the various treatment protocols.

Although the study results defy simplistic understanding, basically few differences were found between IPT and CBT on any of the major outcome variables. Ironically, however, the researchers did discover that there were certain differences in outcome based not on the therapy used, but rather on some important variables unrelated to the models that were investigated.⁴⁵ Some of these variables involved the client's attitude, the treatment expectancy, and the relationship between the therapist and the client.

An article by Scott Miller and Barry Duncan explores the factors that make therapy successful and the factors that mitigate against success. Interestingly, Miller and Duncan were able to discern four areas that contribute to change in the life of a

⁴³ Ibid., p. 268.

⁴⁴Douglas H. Sprenkle & Adrian J. Blow, "Common Factors and Our Sacred Models," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 30, no. 2 (2004): p. 113.

counselee. These four areas and the percent of relative contribution to change, are as follows:

1. Extra therapeutic factors - 40%
2. Relationship factors - 30%
3. Placebo, hope or expectancy - 15%
4. Structure, model and or technique - 15%⁴⁵

The results of both the NIMH and the team of Miller and Duncan lead one to conclude that the model of therapy is not as important as what goes on outside the counseling office and the relationship of the counselor and the counselee.

Thus far, this dissertation has focused on understanding pastoral counseling. We have discussed pastoral counseling as an emerging art and science. After discussing the history and biblical basis of pastoral counseling rooted in the Word of God, we discussed some of the definitions of pastoral counseling that are common today. Lastly, we endeavored to discuss the goal of pastoral counseling, and we mentioned the two models of pastoral counseling—the insight model and the behavioral model. We turn our attention now to the subject of training the pastoral counselor.

Training the Pastoral Counselor

In researching this dissertation, it was very easy to find reams of material on counseling techniques, on goals in counseling, and on every nuance of counseling theory and practice. When I endeavored to look into the vast subject of training the pastoral counselor, however, I felt as if I had entered a virtual wasteland! Few magazines exist that address the subject. A notable exception is *Pastoral Psychology*, an excellent

⁴⁵ Scott Miller, No More Bells and Whistles, *Networker*, March/April 1995, pgs 53-63

resource for the kind of work I am endeavoring to study. Only one *Christianity Today* article specifically addresses the subject of training pastoral counselors.⁴⁶ Only a small handful of books exist on the topic, and I was only able to find one audiovisual resource on DVD.⁴⁷ Of the articles I was able to find, nearly all bemoan the fact that pastors view counseling as just “one more hat” that they must wear.

Grace Ketterman, a psychiatrist and medical director at the Crittenton Center in Kansas City, Missouri, believes that some basic pastoral skill sets must be taught in seminary. She mentions three skills that are needed: first, a healthy sense of self-awareness. second, a need for teaching that helps a pastor recognize when a counselee should be referred to a trained mental health professional. And third, a counselor needs a certain measure of tough love. “A lot of people take advantage of pastors because there is no fee, or pastors are especially sympathetic. So the pastor has to learn tough love”.⁴⁸

Others have recognized this need for more training in counseling for pastors. Frank C. Peters makes reference to an eight-year study by the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, an organization of 4,000 theologians, psychiatrists, and professional workers. This study found that only seven percent of the country’s quarter million clergy people who lead congregations have had “sound and adequate technical psychological training to deal with the serious questions which now come up”.⁴⁹

It must be pointed out, however, that Peters’ work is dated. His work appears in the October 1969 edition of *Bibliotheca sacra*. This means that the study, which was

⁴⁶ Rodney Clapp, “How Many Hats Does Your Pastor Wear?,” *Christianity Today* 28, no. 2 (1984): p. 27.

⁴⁷ Michael L. Baltimore, Crutchfield, Lori Brown, *Clinical Supervisor Training* [CD ROM accompanying the text book] (Allyn and Brown, 2003, accessed).

⁴⁸ Clapp: p. 25.

⁴⁹ Peters: p. 293.

started in 1961, is over forty years old. Obviously, the statistic that only seven percent of the clergy people in the country are adequately equipped is out of date.

In a recent study (1993), directors of Master's-level pastoral counseling training programs were surveyed to determine their perceptions about the skills and competencies in which their students receive training. The study showed that in the university training system, the emphasis is on the ability to identify primary symptoms, develop treatment plans, and conduct clinical studies. Consequently, great emphasis is placed on the DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*). Recognition of training success comes through the passing of the NBCC (National Board of Certified Counselors) examination.⁵⁰

Mona Christenson Barz, one of the survey authors, points out that seminary-trained counselors view their profession from a different vantage point. She writes:

Pastoral competence was not sacrificed in the name of clinical training. Equally strong emphasis was given to the integration of theology and psychology as it relates to pastoral counseling, understanding the relationship between a client's image of self and others and her/his image of God, the ability to identify theological assumptions operative within counseling sessions, and the ability to use theological language and reference within sessions.⁵¹

One writer takes an innovative stand and argues for "spiritual formation" in theological education. Edward Wimberly writes about several different models of spiritual training, but he advocates most strongly for the idea of spiritual formation being a part of the training regiment of any seminary. Although he understands some of the difficulties with spiritual formation (ie. differing orientations, locale in curriculum, and the history of theological education itself), he points out that a theological education is different from any other kind of education. To be prepared for a spiritual ministry is to

⁵⁰ Paul Giblin & Mona Christenson Barz, "Master's Level Pastoral Counseling Training: Skills and Competencies," *Pastoral Psychology* 42, no. 1 (1993): p. 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: p. 13.

be prepared for a spiritual life. No other profession refers to the entry rite as being “called”.

Wimberly refers to three historic models of theological education. The first model is referred to as the “Master” model. Here the teacher was seen as an almost unapproachable expert in all things spiritual. Because he studied the original languages, the history and theology of the church, and philosophy, the pastor was placed on a pedestal by his community and seen as the indisputable expert. This pastoral guise was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Wimberly calls his second model the “Science” model of theological education. This model found its greatest influence in the nineteenth century. Here, great effort was made to mate science and theology in the sense that “the new science of theology was an attempt to ground the authority of the Master in the methodology and literature of scientific theory”.⁵²

Wimberly’s third and last model is the twentieth-century model of Pastoral Ministry, in which ministry is viewed as a profession. Some might even argue that a good role model for the modern pastor is that of a CEO of a small company, empowering, vision casting, and organizing.

Wimberly elaborates on his discussion of spiritual formation in theological education. As one can imagine, the model of ministry to which one adheres will determine which method the institution will use to educate its pastors. Should the emphasis be on original languages, history, philosophy and “keeping up the traditions” of the past generations, like the Master model? Or should emphasis be placed more

⁵² Edward Wimberly, “Spiritual Formation in Theological Education and Psychological Assessment,” *Clergy Assessment and Career Development*: p. 27.

squarely on the Scientific model and scientific research? Perhaps the seminary should model its educational goals after a business school like Harvard's, and award an MBA equivalent degree in church management. (This idea is not too far-fetched. A look at a recent catalog from Christian Book Distributors showed titles such as *Marketing the Church* by George Barna and *Ministry Marketing Made Easy: a Practical Guide to Marketing Your Church Message* by Yvon Prehn.)

After discussing the weaknesses of the three historical models, Wimberly argues that the successful seminary today should “take seriously the role of the minister as a bearer of faith, both as a story teller and as listener to stories of people attempting to live faithful lives”.⁵³ The pastor needs training, so Wimberly advocates for a Spiritual Formation model.

In this particular model, the emphasis is on the maturing of the minister, over the course of his or her ministry. This is to say that “a maturing process of a religious nature is taking place. This process can be tapped by theological education and assessment in order to help the student to be more intentional in professional and spiritual formation”.⁵⁴

The idea of training as a lifetime pursuit is not new. The author of the book of Hebrews talks about maturity in Hebrews 5:14: But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.⁵⁵

This “practice” (γυμναζω) is the Greek word from which we get the English word “gymnasium”. “As a transitive verb it means to train someone or oneself; when

⁵³ Ibid.: p. 28.

⁵⁴ Ibid.: p. 29.

⁵⁵ Hebrews 5:14 NASB

intransitive it means to do gymnastics".⁵⁶ It implies athletic prowess, commitment, and discipline. This is a good word to use if one is talking about spiritual maturity.

The writer of the book of Hebrews was not the only one to talk about spiritual maturity. In Ephesians 4, we read as follows:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love (Ephesians 4:11-16).⁵⁷

Here, Paul talks about the ultimate end of our faith walk, using such phrases as a mature man; the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ; no longer children; and grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head. Each of these carefully-chosen, divinely-placed phrases carries with it the message that the Christian life is a life of continual growth, of constant seasoning, of maturity.

For the pastoral counselor, this idea carries with it many ramifications. For the modern pastor, education does not end with the awarding of a diploma. Rather, education must be pictured as a lifelong process--a slow, careful trek to maturity, both as a minister and as a human being.

⁵⁶ Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, 5th ed., 3 vols., Theologisches Begriffslexikon Zum Neuen Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), p. 312.

⁵⁷ Ephesians 4:11-16 NASB

Winston E. Gooden has written about the lifetime development perspective of clergy. In his article, Gooden lays out the developmental tasks of the differing decades of a person's early life, leading up to middle life.

| | |
|-----|--|
| 20s | Entering the world of adulthood; career decisions; relationships that may lead to marriage and family |
| 30s | Settling down is the theme; consolidation, working toward advancement |
| 40s | A time to reflect on the life structure of early adulthood; realization that one has stopped growing, and has started to grow old; issues of death |

The pastor who enters life in the throws of middle adulthood (ages 40-45) will very likely be responding to the mid-life themes previously discussed. Gooden maintains that each decade of the pastor's life is a building block/skipping stone for the next. "The formation of a pastor is a lifelong task."⁵⁸ This used to be seen as true for all people, until something changed.

In North America, the rise of institutions for primary, secondary and higher education in the middle and late nineteenth century displaced the understanding of learning as a lifelong activity. Learning came to be understood as an activity primarily for children, adolescents, and young (college age) adults.⁵⁹

George Brown lists two barriers to lifelong-learning in ministry. First, when education is viewed only as preparatory for ministry, pastors stop viewing education as something for every stage of their lives. Second, there can be confusion between education and school.⁶⁰

Many people find it hard to think about education or learning apart from educational institutions or formal instruction in classroom settings. And yet a number of those same people confess to

⁵⁸ Gooden: p. 35.

⁵⁹ G. Brown, "Lifelong Learning and Ministry," p. 50.

⁶⁰ Brown, 53.

⁶¹ Ibid.: p. 157.

learning as much from informal discussions in the hallway or cafeteria between classes as they do in the classroom.⁶¹

In an effort to encourage lifelong-learning, a number of professions require a commitment to continuing education. Doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers and a host of other professionals require their members to complete a certain number of hours of continuing education in order for their license or membership to stay current.

However, one looks in vain for specific, measurable requirements for continued practice with the AAPC. The closest one can get to a requirement is the following expectation of 'responsible' continuing education:

The AAPC is committed to the continued growth and development of its members. Certified members are expected to maintain an active pastoral counseling practice, participate in a responsible program of continuing education, and maintain a consultative relationship with peers.⁶²

It would appear that continuing education has not been codified in the pastoral counseling world. This is not to say that the AAPC does not believe in, or advocate for, lifelong education and formation. On the contrary, it advocates strongly for continued professional development. On its website, the AAPC defines its position.:

Formation in the sense in which we propose to use it, signifies an intentional, planned process with a specific goal in mind, namely that of being adequately and competently educated, trained and formed in a certain tradition, profession, trade or guild, such as pastoral counseling. Since there is not a point at which anyone, no matter how accomplished or gifted, ever completely achieves this goal, formation is understood to be a life-long process.

So we see that, although the AAPC supports the concept of life-long formation, it does not require any specific continuing education for its members.

⁶² Han van den Blink, "Life-Long Formation in AAPC" <http://www.aapc.org/formation.htm>

Continuing Education and the Air Force Chaplain

The USAF values continuing education. Education is mandatory at every level of leadership. Young captains are required to take Squadron Officers' School. It is offered as a rigorous six-week, in-residence program and by correspondence. Those taking it by correspondence find that it is a huge commitment of personal time, often taking a year to complete.

When an officer is selected for the rank of major, the education continues with Air Command and Staff College (ACSC). Often compared to a Master's-level degree, this program takes an entire year to complete, even when taken as a full-time program. Issues of leadership, vision, and logistics are studied in depth by every Air Force major. Without completing this program, an officer will not be promoted to the next higher rank, lieutenant colonel.

Those fortunate enough to be selected for the rank of lieutenant colonel have already completed two rigorous courses of study. But higher rank demands higher education, so all lieutenant colonels, including chaplains, are expected to complete a program called Air War College. This research-oriented program is another year-long study of air power and leadership.

By the time an Air Force chaplain retires, he or she has, as a minimum, the equivalent of twenty-six months of full-time study, in addition to his or her professional studies. The Air Force values education in leadership and military science, requiring even its chaplain to spend many hours studying those subjects.

Although a large part of their ministry will require counseling skills, the USAF Chaplaincy has no specific counseling requirement for its newly accessioned chaplains. The educational requirement for these chaplains from the Department of Defense reads:

Baccalaureate degree (not less than 120 semester hours) and a Master's degree in Theology or related subjects (not less than 72 semester hours) from an accredited institution (Department of Defense Regulation 1304.19).

Consequently, it is not unheard of for a military chaplain to arrive at his or her first active-duty base, fully ordained, fully commissioned, but *without one minute of counseling education*. It has been this author's experience that young chaplains are counseling suicidal young soldiers, divorcing couples, and depressed people without the necessary tools.

In an effort to amend this situation, the Air Force Chief of Chaplains has instituted a rigorous mentoring program for all chaplains. The program's goal is for a new chaplain to be mentored by a more senior chaplain through fifty-two different modules, over the course of a year. These subjects run the spectrum from being ready for war, to chapel funds, to leadership, to military bearing.

Only two of the modules specifically cover the subject of counseling. The first module has to do with non-crisis pastoral counseling, and the second has to do with crisis counseling.

In the first module, entitled simply "Non-crisis Pastoral Counseling", several practical issues are broached. For example, the mentoring chaplain is instructed to discuss with the protégé chaplain the differences between being a spiritual advisor and being a therapist. Other practical issues, such as record-keeping, confidentiality, referrals, and counseling in the evening, are discussed.

In the second module, “Crisis-Counseling”, the mentoring chaplain is instructed to teach the protégé about being a duty chaplain (the chaplain who handles after-duty calls for counseling), death notifications, overcoming crisis counseling memories, and intervention with suicidal individuals. A large part of this module involves the mentoring chaplain sharing personal experiences with the protégé.

Both of these continuing education modules are important. Since some of our chaplains enter the chaplaincy with no counseling training or experience, it is laudable that the Air Force is making an attempt to help train its chaplains.

But, sadly, this well-intentioned attempt at providing training does not go nearly far enough. For example, neither module gives much more direction than simply telling the mentoring chaplain which questions to ask and which subjects to discuss. No resources are given, except a web link back to the Air Force Chief of Chaplain’s website, which contains some more counseling information.

Prompts direct on-line viewers to an area of the website devoted to counseling education. Several subjects are addressed in this area. They include stress management, grief, depression, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Critical Incident Stress Management, and overcoming marital infidelity. (The author donated this article after finding this scant resource on the web.) The system is a start, but not really an adequate tool for helping fledging new accession chaplains get up to standards in the world of counseling.

Another innovation new to the Air Force Chaplaincy is the joint training between the US Army and the Air Force. In 2003 and 2004, two Air Force chaplains a year were selected to attend a fourteen-month-long program at an Army base near a state university. The program involves full-time university study, leading to a Master of Science degree in

Community Counseling. In addition, each chaplain is expected to spend three hundred hours doing supervised counseling.

I was privileged to be one of the first Air Force chaplains to be selected for this program. In May of 2003 I moved my family from Scott AFB, in the St. Louis area, to Columbus, Georgia. Together with three Army chaplains, I became a full-time student at Columbus State University, and I joined the staff at the Army's Family Life Training Program. Since I was the very first Air Force chaplain to be a part of this program, I was expected to partner with the three Army chaplains to "write the book" on joint training.

The fourteen-month program went very well. We all graduated with honors, we all completed three hundred hours of individual and family counseling, and we all became Certified Professional Counselors by passing the National Board of Certified Counselors exam. And we all became friends for life. This is only one example of the creative and innovative ways that the Air Force is endeavoring to help chaplains become more skilled in this vital and important avenue of ministry.

It should be noted that the Air Force doing pastoral training for its chaplains is nothing new. In his classic book on military ministry, Richard Hutcheson points out that:

In the late fifties the Air Force began to provide four weeks of concentrated counseling training for large numbers of chaplains. A course for Protestant chaplains was developed at the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas, and a similar course for Catholic chaplains was provided at Catholic University, Washington, D. C. Approximately one hundred chaplains a year were sent to these two institutions. In the sixties, the Air Force turned to ecumenical training at the Institute of Religion, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas.⁶³

Most recently new chaplains have been required to attend two educational courses held at the Air Force Chaplains' school at Maxwell AFB, in Montgomery, Alabama.

⁶³ Hutcheson., *The Churches and the Chaplaincy*, 77.

New chaplains must attend two educational courses. The first course is entitled “Commissioned Officer Training”. The second course is entitled “Chaplain Basic Course” or “The Basic Course”.

Perhaps the biggest change in the way the Air Force prepares chaplains, however, occurred in 2004. Until 2004, The Basic Course had always been four weeks long. Subjects covered include chaplain functions that are unique to the military chaplaincy, the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, and the differences between pluralism and ecumenism. Also covered in the Chaplain Basic Course are ethics, the role of the chaplain, staff relationships, and ministry in a remote location.

Now, for the first time ever, the most recent class, which commenced in October 2004, was extended to six weeks. It spent the two additional weeks on what was called “The Chief’s Toolbox”. Three areas were covered: Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP); Short Term Pastoral Care; and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

The Air Force Chaplaincy is working to equip newly commissioned chaplains because it is discovering that the training with which many chaplains come into the chaplaincy is simply inadequate. Since chaplains tend to do far more counseling than the typical pastor, seminary training that might be adequate for a parish pastor may well be inadequate for the military chaplain.

The Uniqueness of Counseling in the Military Ministry

A military chaplain is a full member in two unique organizations. As a clergyperson, the military chaplain is an ordained member of a religious organization. As a military officer, the chaplain is a recognized leader in the military organization. As

Hutcheson said, “The chaplain is not just half-military and half-church. He is fully a member of both institutions.”⁶⁴

This role conflict can often cause difficulties for the chaplain who endeavors to remain faithful to his calling and faithful to the military oath of office.⁶⁵ On the one hand, there are times that one’s military service appears to contradict one’s calling as a minister of the gospel. For example, chaplains are cautioned against praying “In Jesus Name” while praying in a public setting. Some military chaplains see this as being an untenable compromise of their faith. On the other hand, there are times when a chaplain’s calling seems incompatible with his or her military obligation. For example, as an Air Force officer, I am constantly aware of the possibility of being assigned to a remote location—Korea, Iraq, Greenland—for a full year, without my family. For some military chaplains, this is incompatible with their understanding of God’s command to care for their families.

Being full members of two distinctly different organizations, with sometimes antithetical goals, can obviously cause role conflict for chaplains. This is not to say that role conflict is always a negative thing. The presence of conflict forces them to constantly evaluate their allegiances. Chaplains universally learn, through a career-long series of errors and learning moments, to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁵ All military officers are required to take an “oath of office”. This oath of office is as follows: I, (full name) having been appointed a (rank), in the United States Air Force, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter, so help me God. John Hawkins Napier III, “The Air Force Officer’s Guide,” 28th ed. (Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA: 1989). 5.

⁶⁶ Mark 12:17 NASB

Two researchers, Burchard and Zahn, set out to understand this dynamic and how it is that chaplains are able to function as fully vested members in both institutions. They asked a number of chaplains questions designed to examine the issue of chaplain allegiance. They discovered that, when a chaplain is faced with a situation in which there is a conflict between their role as clergy and their role as military members, the chaplain is likely to resolve the conflict in favor of the military. This is not surprising, since the military is the institution with the power to fire a chaplain, imprison a chaplain, or, in a worst case scenario, shoot a chaplain.

The researchers also discovered that their conclusion directly contradicts the chaplains' own verbal assessment of the way in which they resolve such issues. Ironically, the chaplains had believed their strongest allegiance was to their clerical role. It is from that role that they derive their self-image. In their study of research questions designed to test allegiances, Zahn found that the self-image of the chaplains whose attitudes he studied almost universally put the clergy role first and the military officer role second.⁶⁷ It appears that chaplains, when confused about their calling and their allegiance, fall back on their identity as clergy, rather than as officers or military members.

This role tension is seen in the way chaplains are typically addressed. It is considered mildly rude to address a chaplain by rank. Rather, chaplains are universally addressed by the title chaplain. Even the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, a major general, is referred to as chaplain. The official signature block of a chaplain lists his name first, the word chaplain, followed by his rank, and his service branch (JOHN DOE, Chaplain, Captain United States Air Force). This is more than just a concession to identity

⁶⁷ Hutcheson, p. 20-22.

confusion; it sends a message to the entire military community that someone is a chaplain first and an officer second.

But this very identity issue points to the confusion between roles. Is the chaplain an officer with rank or a clergy with military position? "Although it is true, then, that a chaplain is a church professional whose ministry takes place in a secular institution outside the church, it is not true that he has 'left the church and entered the military.'"⁶⁸ The chaplain has both roles to play.

One area in which military chaplains potentially face great role conflict is in their understanding of the biblical idea of war. This places the chaplain in a unique and often complicated dual role. Does the chaplain support the war effort and thereby condone the killing of others? Or does the chaplain preach against war as a general topic but make exceptions for the current situation? Or maybe the chaplain feels compelled to speak against war in total and thereby abrogate his responsibility as a military officer.

In an excellent opinion piece in *Christianity Today*, a retired Navy chaplain, Douglas K. Stewart clarifies the danger in making dogmatic statements on war. Chaplain Stewart makes the point:

I can envision a Christianity without the military, but I cannot envision the military (a needy mission field) without Christians present and active to communicate the life-saving good news of Jesus Christ. Gorman is right about Christians eschewing violence, but he seems unaware of the critical role that faithful Christians and people of high moral character can play in lessening the horrors of war and making the hell of combat more humane. In the heat of battle, when the insanity of rage and violence tempt men to become barbarians, Christian officers and NCOs (Non-commissioned officers) can exert a powerful counterinfluence for humane treatment of enemy prisoners and civilians, for reducing wanton destruction and needless bloodshed.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁹ Douglas Stewart, "The Just-Chaplain Theory," *Christianity Today* (2000): p. 60.

It is clear that the chaplain is in the ideal position to bridge the gulf of strained allegiances between one's faith and one's obligation as a military member. But the chaplain is only able to address this issue with integrity because the chaplain is a member of the same organization as the military member. The chaplain wears the same uniform, draws the same pay from the same office, moves with the military member, and suffers the same things as his uniformed compatriot. One is reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:6-8:

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.⁷⁰

Indeed, in many ways the analogy of Jesus coming to earth and taking the form of a servant is not too far afield for understanding the ministry of the military chaplain. The obsolete name "parson" and, by extension, "parsonage" comes from the Medieval Latin term for "person". The military "parson" (or chaplain) is the Person of Christ in the midst of an organization often given to ideals antithetical to the clergyperson's calling.

The Air Force Chaplaincy selects, every year, a phrase that captures the essence of military ministry. Some years, the phrase is thought-provoking, such as "Seek Peace and Pursue It", taken from Psalm 34. Some years it is whimsical, such as the year the theme was "Lively Servants of the Living Lord". But perhaps the most meaningful expression of our mission was, simply, "Visible Reminders of the Holy".

The USAF Chaplaincy pictures the chaplain as being a "Visible Reminder of the Holy". This is a carefully-crafted phrase, whether in the heat of battle or standing in line

⁷⁰ Philippians 2:6-8 NASB

at the commissary, which points to the chaplain's role as the reminder that God Almighty dwells in our midst.

The role of the chaplain, then, is something akin to the role of the parish pastor, but it is something totally different as well. The military member knows that there is someone who lives in his or her community whose sole job it is to be available to provide a comfort and a divine perspective. This is especially important during the very stressful times of one's life, be it on the conventional battle field or the battle field of daily life.

In addition, the *types* of issues that are brought to the military chaplain are much more complex than those brought to the parish pastor. As a pastor of a rural church in Pennsylvania, I dealt mostly with marriage problems, people with chronic or terminal illness, or the occasional wayward child in the youth group. In my chapel today, I needed to deal with a young lady who claims to be a Rastafarian and refuses to cut her hair, per Air Force regulation. Last month we had a young woman take her own life because she was accused of a sexual indiscretion. Hardly a week goes by that some chaplain at our base does not deal with a life-or-death counseling session. And often, their seminary training leaves them without answers, without resources, without ideas.

The military chaplain is in an inimitable position to be better able to minister to the military person. Not only are there issues of proximity (chaplains obviously live near, and work near, military people), but there are also issues of understanding. The chaplain is in a position to know about military life, not just because he has studied it, but because he lives with the same issues day in and day out. This confederacy means that the military chaplain is exceptionally qualified to counsel with military members from a

perspective of understanding, of sympathy, and of solidarity. Chaplains are uniquely qualified to be spiritual guides.

Hutcheson points to four advantages that the military chaplains have over their civilian counterparts.

1. The military chaplain lives among his or her people, so he or she sees them for who they really are. Whereas civilian ministers only sees their people in their “Sunday best”, not so the chaplain. He or she sees them in their dirty utility uniforms more often than in their shiny, clean dress uniforms.
2. The military chaplain’s insider status in a total institution gives him or her an enhanced pastoral ministry through greater awareness of the problems faced and the lives lived by that chaplain’s parishioners.
3. The chaplain has a ready-made contact with the unchurched. Although a military person might have never been inside a church, he or she will know who his or her chaplain is. Military chaplains have unique contact with the unchurched.
4. Lastly, the chaplain has the opportunity to be ‘an insider’ to the military community. This gives the chaplain an unprecedented opportunity to be a ‘spiritual guide’ to an institution given to death and destruction. Lastly, the chaplain has the rare opportunity to minister to the secular institution itself.⁷¹

⁷¹ Hutcheson, pgs. 48-49.

David Benner, in his excellent book *Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest*, points out in clear and lucid prose the value of someone who is a spiritual guide. He relates the story of a Jewish friend of his, who chose to become a psychiatrist. When the young man told his father, an orthodox rabbi, of his plan, the rabbi/father exclaimed “Why psychiatry? You have the Scriptures. What more do you need for those kinds of problems?”⁷²

It is this attitude of people of faith that makes psychology so fascinating. Benner addresses the question of whether “matters of the soul” (his term) are the domain of the physician/psychiatrist or whether they are more adroitly addressed through the medium of a spiritual guide. A spiritual guide walks with people through their problems, and helps bring a spiritual perspective to life’s issues.

Benner traces the idea of spiritual guides down through history, starting with the time of Christ. He argues that “the Christian church has, since the time of Christ, made the care and cure of souls one of its primary concerns”.⁷³ He goes on to talk of the spread of the spiritual guide idea, tracing the idea through Russian literature, through the pre-Reformation Church, and through the writing of such great theologians as John Calvin and Martin Luther.

His argument is startling in its simplicity. He simply argues that many issues that land, by default, on the psychiatrist’s couch are more correctly dealt with on a spiritual basis. He points to a number of case studies to strengthen his argument. For example, he discusses a middle-aged man, George, who lost a great deal of money in the stock market and eventually found it difficult to pay back his debts. This issue caused a rift between

⁷² David G. Benner, *Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest* (London: Baker Book House Company, 1988), p. 60.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

George and his wife who, though very supportive, insisted that George attend Gambler's Anonymous. George went once or twice but did not see himself in the same league as the other gamblers in the room. He stopped attending, but made amends for the damage he caused.

It was after the incident was all over that the tax auditor discovered the awful truth that George has paid back his gambling debts with money from his business, a highly suspect and possibly illegal venture.

George met with a psychiatrist, who diagnosed him as being depressed, possibly suicidal, and prescribed a narcotic. He also hinted that an admission to a psychiatric hospital might be in order.

But George's pastor came to visit George, and together they discussed the genesis of the issue. Together they talked about the spiritual issues revolving around this malady. Issues of greed and deception were broached. Together they came to understand the investing in a new way. They saw it as a violation of the best God had for George and his family.

Benner points out that the problem George was facing, gambling addiction, could not be adequately addressed with a psychological tool kit alone. It required a spiritual understanding of the root cause.⁷⁴

Chaplains are so valuable to the military organization because they can see that problems have a spiritual base and a spiritual resolution. While the military psychiatrist might see every issue as a medical issue, the team approach to medical and spiritual care would see that many problems faced by military members are spiritual problems.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pgs. 35-37.

Of course, being members of two distinct organizations, the Church and the military, carries with it a unique danger in that the chaplain's allegiance can sometimes be called into question by either the Church or the military organization. This is a problem particularly in the area of pastoral confidentiality. In the military system, the chaplain alone has the opportunity to counsel with the unquestioned assurance that the conversation he or she is having with a counselee is protected by what is referred to variously as "privileged communication" or "confidentiality."

One textbook on counseling ethics defines confidentiality as "the ethical responsibility required of all national counseling organizations and some state licensing boards that nothing disclosed within the counseling session will be revealed to another person without the client's expressed consent."⁷⁵ This definition delves into the legality of the counselor keeping certain things in confidence.

Confidentiality, however, is different than privileged communication. The same textbook referenced above defines privileged communication as "a legal right which exists by statute and which protects clients from having their confidences revealed publicly from the witness stand during legal proceedings without their permission."⁷⁶

This issue of the relationship between the counselee and the chaplain is of vital importance and simply defining terms does not sufficiently address the myriad issues effectively. One way the Air Force has endeavored to address this issue is through the training of new accession chaplains. In the Chaplain Basic Course, the initial six-week training that all chaplains receive, several hours are spent discussing and clarifying the

⁷⁵ Samuel Gladding, Theodore P. Remley, Jr. & Charles H. Huber, *Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, ed. Kevin M. Davis (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001), p. 19.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 21

role and limitations of the chaplain's counseling. Part of this training involves lecture, role playing, and a question-and-answer time.

In addition to the initial training that chaplains receive, refresher training is offered through the fifty-two mentoring sessions, referenced in the section of this dissertation dealing with chaplain continuing education. One session deals specifically with Privileged Communication (Appendix Four). At a recent mentoring session at Lackland AFB, the staff spent an hour with an Air Force lawyer (a JAG) discussing the legal ramifications of the Air Force's privileged communication laws.

In addition to this training, the Air Force Chief of Chaplains has written a policy letter delineating the official policy of privileged communication for chaplains. In this document, the policy is laid out, unambiguously guaranteeing the counselee the right to speak to a chaplain in confidence. This letter reads, in part:

There should be no misunderstanding: It is the policy of the United States Air Force Chaplain Service that under no circumstances (except with the client's consent) will a chaplain ever compromise the privilege by disclosing information revealed in a confidential setting. (Appendix Three)

It should be clear that the Air Force chaplain enjoys a certain level of restricted communication that provides greater confidential conversation than even a physician or an attorney would enjoy. This double-edged sword is both a great blessing and a great responsibility for the AFC.

The Military Family

The population of the USAF is very young. The average age of an enlisted Air Force member is 29; 41.5 percent of the force is under the age of 26.⁷⁷ This young demographic would seem to indicate that this population will face the problems typically faced by young adults with financial stress, relationship struggles and career decisions. Given the fact that the military is by definition a highly mobile organization, one can see where there would be a higher counseling rate than there would be in a small town, where young adults may live down the street from their parents.

One can also surmise that the chaplain who is trying to help young adults through the difficulties of life will undoubtedly face problems for which there do not seem to be a solution. Invariably, these issues seem perennially bound up with military service.

A major study of Air Force family dynamics was commissioned in 1980 by the Air Force Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Richard Carr. Dubbed the “Families in Blue” study, the study focused on the needs of Air Force families, specifically families in the Pacific Air Force theater—Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and other areas throughout the Pacific.

Essentially the study found that the primary areas in which Air Force families needed help were in couple communication, parent education, and marriage counseling. Even though the Air Force has a long-standing and well-deserved reputation for being family-friendly, many families were also concerned about quality-of-life issues. Overall, most Air Force families said that they were satisfied with their quality of life, especially

⁷⁷ Secretary of the Air Force, *U.S. Air Force Snapshot* (SAF/PAX: United States Government Printing Office, 2004).

single military parents. ninety percent were positive in their feelings about the chaplaincy. Twenty-five percent of Air Force wives surveyed said that they were experiencing difficulty communicating in their marriage; twenty percent characterized their difficulties as being serious. One couple in three was experiencing low to poor marital quality. An equal number expressed concern about their relationship with their children.⁷⁸

The most telling statistic in the survey, however, indicated that the majority of Air Force family members do not feel close to anyone in the Air Force community. Although chaplains may feel a sense of community with their parishioners, the study found that most military people feel very alone. This, added to the fact that most Air Force members live far from their family of origin, explains why many Air Force people feel alienated, lonely, and anxious for someone to come along side and give a listening ear. Though dated, this study points to a fundamental need in Air Force families--the need for pastoral care.

David Hadley, a counseling professional from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes from an extensive background of counseling military couples. Pastor Hadley believes that because service members make up a select group, from which many of the less mature and less intelligent have been screened out, their divorce rate should be quite low. But the divorce rate for military families is roughly equal to that of the civilian population. Pastor Hadley believes this is true because military families are under additional stresses.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Dennis K. Orthner, *Families in Blue* (Washington, DC: USAF Publication, 1980), p. 110.

⁷⁹ Hadley, pgs. 86-87.

Stressors Unique to Military Life

In the study *Families in Blue* referenced above, it was discovered that military commanders and first sergeants list five personal issues that trouble their troops more than any others. These issues, in order of their prevalence are as follows:

1. Financial concerns: Military members often do not make a lot of money. Even if an Airman with a family were to stay in the military for twenty years and achieve the rank of Master Sergeant, he or she would still only make about 75 percent of what the average wage earner would make.⁸⁰
2. Marital concerns: These are very real for every married person, but the stress of military life can add an additional dynamic to military couples.
3. Child abuse or neglect: The Air Force, like all military institutions, endeavors to watch out for the children of military members. Consequently, military members are more scrutinized and held to a higher standard than a family living in the civilian world. For example, a young mother who leaves her child in a car while she runs into the store downtown might face the scorn of her neighbors, but on a military base, she faces the very real possibility of putting her husband in the awkward position of having to stand before his commander and explain the actions of his wife.
4. Job-related stress: Deployments, danger, and exercises all add to the stress level of the average military person. The likelihood of being in

⁸⁰ David Savegeau, *Places Rated Almanac* (New York, NY: Hungry Minds, Inc., 2000).

harm's way at some point in one's career also adds to the stress of military life.

5. Family concerns regarding frequent work-related travel: Some military members are away from home more than they are home. This adds to the level of stress, both for the military member and for his or her family.

The stress factors listed above are possible for any family. Every family has its unique stresses. But the stresses facing a military family are different and, in some ways, more devastating. Along with the stressors listed above, there are other issues that make the military family a unique counseling field.

One often overlooked dynamic in the military family is the prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Of course, many families have members who suffer from PTSD. But the military, by its very nature, lends itself to the difficulties inherent with trauma.

The New England Journal of Medicine recently reported on a new study conducted with some 6,200 veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The authors conclude that rates of PTSD were significantly higher after combat duty when compared to the rates of PTSD seen in the soldiers who had not deployed. This is particularly true for soldiers who served in Iraq.

The authors point to significant associations that were observed for major depression and for the misuse of alcohol. Each of these would negatively impact on a harmonious family unit.

Further, they point out that the prevalence of PTSD (according to the strict definition of the term) increased in a linear manner with the increase in the number of

firefights in which the person was involved during deployment. For those soldiers who were never involved in a firefight, the PTSD rate was 4.5 percent. For those involved in one or two firefights, the rate rose to 9.3 percent; three to five firefights yielded a PTSD rate over 12 percent. The highest rate of PTSD, nearly 20 percent, was seen among the soldiers who were involved in more than five firefights.⁸¹

Dr. Stephen Muse is the Director of Pastoral Counselor Training at the Pastoral Institute in Columbus, Georgia. He is also an ordained Presbyterian minister. I met Dr. Muse while studying for a Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Columbus State University. Dr. Muse has spent countless hours preparing military chaplains for the rigors of counseling in a military setting. In an unpublished article, he writes:

Even when they (soldiers) are able to endure the battle, they often fail in the mission to be able to once more enjoy the sacred origins because of the hidden scars that remain within. So for ten or twenty years or sometimes an entire lifetime, they still do not know how to 'come home from the war'.⁸²

Military chaplains need greater exposure to the current treatments of PTSD. While the local parish pastor may never have a counselee with this disorder, the military pastor is almost guaranteed to find counselees with post-trauma disorders. Given the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, military chaplains are going to be on the leading edge of treatment for this disorder.

The military is addressing this issue by looking to some of the leading experts in the area of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment. In March of 2005, fifty Army and Air Force chaplains came together for a four-day-long seminar on the treatment of PTSD.

⁸¹ MD Hoge, Charles W., "Combat Duty in Iraq and Afganistan Mental Health Problems, and Barriers to Care," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 351, no. 1 (2004): pgs. 13-18.

⁸² Stephen Muse, "Fit for Life, Fit for War: Reflections on the Warrior Ethos, 2005," p. p. 15, Columbus, GA.: 15

The guest speaker was Dr. Susan Johnson, one of the originators and the main proponent of emotionally-focused couple therapy. Dr. Johnson believes that the greatest resource for a military person coming back from the trauma of war is the survivor's partner. The bonds that tie a couple together can also act to ameliorate the anguish one experiences in the days and months after a traumatic event.⁸³

Exceptional Mobility

Military members move more often than their civilian counterparts. This is especially true of officers, who routinely move every three years. Though enlisted troops do not move quite as frequently, they still move far more than civilians.

Moving to a new duty location is known in the military as going through a "Permanent Change of Station". This is often referred to by the abbreviation PCS, as in "I am due to PCS this summer". This phrase is also common in the verb form, PCSing: "The chaplain is PCSing to Germany next month".

The constant PCS's that a family goes through can add great stress on a family. Moves are especially taxing when children are involved. And as children approach high school age, moves are even more traumatic.

Lack of Family Structure

One of the difficulties of life in the military is the absence of an extended family structure. Very few military members are fortunate enough to be stationed close to their families of origin. For a vast majority of military members, "family" is a distant influence. Communication often comes through e-mails, phone calls, and the occasional visit home.

⁸³ Susan Johnson, *Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy with Trauma Survivors*, ed. Michael p. Nichols, The Guilford Family Therapy Series (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2002), p. 115.

The stress that this dynamic places in the military member is hard to measure. It is excruciating for a military member to be far from home and to talk to his or her parents on Christmas or Thanksgiving, knowing that the entire family is gathered together for the holiday, while the military member is unable to attend the family function.

Conclusion

In this section of the dissertation, we have covered the topic of AFC counselor education in some depth and looked at a wide variety of resources. We began by discussing pastoral counseling as an emerging art and science. We looked at some of the work done by R. B. Carter, and we also looked at some of the contributions being made to the profession by the AAPC. We also looked at some statistical studies that indicate that many people trust pastoral counselors to help them with their personal problems.

After establishing an understanding of the underpinnings of pastoral counseling, we moved on to explore the history of pastoral counseling. We started with a study of the classic duo of Minirth and Meier as we sought to establish the history of the profession. In this brief overview of history, it was established that a defining moment for pastoral counseling occurred during and after World War II, when the Church was called upon to minister to literally hundreds of thousands of returning soldiers, many of whom suffered from what we now know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

After talking about the history of pastoral counseling, we endeavored to meld together the work of several writers, establishing a biblical basis for pastoral counseling. By exploring both the writings of subject experts and the writings of sacred scripture, we laid a firm foundation for a biblical mandate for the pastoral counselor.

Of course, no literature review would be complete without a definition of terms. We surveyed a number of different texts, looking for an adequate definition of pastoral counseling. Finally, we established our own definition: *The act of entering into relationship with another person for the purpose of helping that other person develop ways to take responsibility for their own life and actions and to grow to be a more committed, mature Christian.*

A short section of the dissertation was committed to helping flesh out the definition. Words such as relationship, purpose, responsibility, and maturity were highlighted for their importance to the concept of pastoral counseling.

We moved to the next logical consideration the goal of pastoral counseling. This lengthy section addresses several key questions: what exactly are we attempting to do as pastoral counselors? How do we know what the goal is, and how do we know when we have achieved that goal? What does success in counseling look like? This is a fairly long, intense section. The reason for this is simple: in order to achieve success, we must understand success, and we must know what success looks like. Often, pastoral counselors do not know when to end counseling because they do not know what they are seeking. Defining the goal of counseling helps with this issue.

The next section of the dissertation addresses the training given pastoral counselors in general and Air Force chaplains in particular. This dissertation will focus on exploring whether Air Force chaplains have sufficient counseling skills for the work they are called upon to do. Consequently, training becomes an important issue to this study. Unfortunately, not as much is written on the subject of training the pastoral counselor as one might like.

One sub-subject considered in this section of the dissertation had to do with the subject of education as a lifetime pursuit. As a middle-aged man working toward a Doctor of Ministry degree, I find the idea of lifelong learning to be particularly appealing. For ministry to succeed, it must have a continual flow of new ideas and new challenges. Maybe that is why I love my work so passionately.

It was natural and obvious to end this literature review by looking at what the USAF is doing today to offer continuing education opportunities to the men and women who wear the uniform of the Air Force chaplain.

The premise of this literature review has been that counseling in the military context is different than counseling in the context of a civilian parish. The needs are different, the people expect different things, and there is often a feeling that the counseling must produce rapid results, because military people tend to move quickly.

Of course, it goes without saying that life in the military has its advantages. A built-in support group, a steady income, 100% employment, free medical care, strict discipline, meaningful employment, and a great feeling of *esprit de corps* are just a few of the many benefits of military life.

But with all the benefits of military life, the military chaplain is still faced with a daunting ministry challenge. How does the military ministry effectively impact a body of men and women who may have no religious faith, who may be suffering from some trauma they were involved in as a result of their calling to the military, and who may have little or no support from their extended family?

Obviously, it takes a special person to minister in this arena. The military chaplain is “one with the troops” and as such is in an exceptional place to help the

hurting. The camaraderie established by belonging to the same organization and facing the same problems can afford the military pastor an opportunity to say things and advise soldiers in a way for which others could only hope.

Cartoons of the Second World War shed great light on the perceived ministry of the military chaplain. In one cartoon, a huge bruiser of a shore patrolman weeps on the shoulder of a little chaplain saying, “And nobody loves me.” In another, a sailor says to a weeping chaplain, “But that’s only half my story.” Still another cartoon shows a Marine during a monsoon in the tropics complaining to a chaplain who is sitting on his desk to stay dry in his flooded office. “Chaplain,” the Marine complains, “my tent leaks!” The clear perception of chaplains was that they were problem solvers.⁸⁴

But this opportunity comes at a cost. Being one with the troops means leaving the comfort of the local parish filled with like-minded saints and taking on the persona and the lifestyle of a military man or woman. It is only by sensing the call into the military ministry that military pastors can know that they will endure and minister faithfully to the community in the Name of the God who calls them.

⁸⁴ Hutcheson, p. 75.

CHAPTER 3

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

Ever since my seminary days when I first became a chaplain candidate in 1981, I have felt compelled to serve the men and women of the USAF. In the meantime, I had served as a youth pastor for four years and as a solo pastor for another four years. After eight years of pastoral ministry, I knew that I loved being a pastor and felt comfortable in my role. I then received my long-awaited call to join the ranks of the men and women of the USAF chaplaincy.

When I arrived at my first duty station in Arkansas, I was in for a huge shock. The skill sets I had learned as a pastor—leading a board, preaching appropriate sermons, visiting the sick—had almost no parallel in my new position as an Air Force chaplain. Instead, I was expected to spend a large percentage of my time counseling. As a parish pastor, I had occasion to do a small amount of counseling—maybe five hours a month. But in my first year as an Air Force chaplain, I was doing ten times that much. I was overwhelmed.

Added to this was the fact that much of the counseling I was doing was completely foreign to me. In the parish, I might have had the occasional wayward teenager who refused to attend youth group on Sunday night. In the Air Force, I was counseling eighteen- or nineteen-year-old Airmen who were struggling with having taken a human life on the battlefield. In the parish, I dealt with couples from my church that came to talk about their prayer life together or their struggling marriage. In the chaplaincy, I was dealing with young husbands whose mission took them to Europe,

where they fell in love with a local barmaid. Both the quantity of the cases and the severity of the situations left me feeling totally unqualified for my new calling. My suspicion is that many new chaplains feel the same way that I felt when I first started—intimidated by the youngest airman, unsure of their counsel, and anxious to end a counseling session before it got too deep!

In spite of having met the selective requirements for military chaplains, many chaplains find themselves ill-prepared for the large counseling load that they encounter in their first assignment.⁸⁵ And yet, counseling is the heart of the AFC's duties.

The majority of Christian chaplains entering active duty possess a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. But the M.Div. degree is an eclectic degree, covering wide-ranging topics, such as church history, theology, homiletics, apologetics, biblical studies, Christian education, world religions, biblical languages, church administration, and philosophy. Pastoral counseling is but one of a number of subjects covered in most M.Div. programs. Even seminaries which offer quality M.Div. degrees require a minimal amount of study in the area of counseling. In its most recent catalog, Covenant Theological Seminary, the national seminary of the Presbyterian Church in America, lists five courses leading to a concentration in the area of counseling for the M.Div. degree. However, only two of these courses—Introduction to Counseling and Marriage and Family Counseling--are required courses for the regular, ordination-track M.Div. program.⁸⁷

Not surprisingly, chaplains arrive at their first duty assignment with a wide range of needed skills but with very little expertise and sometimes very little training in the area

⁸⁵ Guild, pages unnumbered.

⁸⁷ "2000-2002 Catalog," ed. Covenant Theological Seminary (2000).

of pastoral counseling. As a result, the problem is that many AFCs are poorly prepared to do the counseling required of them.

Study Questions

Therefore, this study will address two questions: First, in what ways did Air Force chaplains' prior training in counseling equip them for their chaplain ministry? And second, in what ways did Air Force chaplains' prior training in counseling fail to equip them for their chaplain ministry?

Project Methodology

The research design of this study followed a qualitative approach. Sharan B. Merriam, in her *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, defines qualitative research as "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible."⁸⁸

This qualitative study's methodology involved interviewing a focus group of several active-duty Air Force chaplains. David L. Morgan, in his outstanding book *The Focus Group Guidebook*, suggests that all effective focus groups have three basic defining features in common: they are a research method for collecting qualitative data; they are focused efforts at data gathering; and they generate data through group discussions.⁸⁹

In order to study this group in a meaningful way, the focus group was limited to first-term Air Force chaplains who had no prior experience as a chaplain in another

⁸⁸ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), p. 5.

⁸⁹ David L. & Krueger Morgan, Richard A., *The Focus Group Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1998), pgs. 29-32.

branch of the service. In other words, these were pastors who came into the military either after serving in a local church, synagogue, or mosque or after completing seminary. All the chaplains in this focus group were either captains or first lieutenants. It should be noted that chaplains come into the military as first lieutenants, or they come in as captains if they have several years of pastoral or military experience.

Further, the group was limited to those chaplains serving at Lackland Air Force Base (LAFB) as their first duty assignment. The average age for these chaplains was just over 34 years of age. By virtue of the requirements for the position, all have the equivalent of a M.Div. degree or higher. LAFB is a unique environment in which to conduct this focus group. First, it is unique because LAFB is the largest single Air Force base in the world, with approximately 35,000 active duty and civilian employees.⁹⁰ The chapel staff consists of twenty-two chaplains and nineteen enlisted troops, which makes it the largest Air Force chapel staff in the world.

Second, it is a unique environment because the mission of LAFB is quite diverse. The base consists of a number of different wings, and each wing has its own mission. For example, Wilford Hall at LAFB is the largest Air Force hospital in the world, and it has its own wing. Air Force people travel from all over the world to be treated at Wilford Hall. With 16,000 admissions and 700,000 patient visits a year,⁹¹ it rivals many city hospitals.

I am attached to the 37th Training Wing (37TRW). This wing is broken into three branches:

⁹⁰ *Lackland Air Force Base Web Site*, [Http://www.Lackland.Af.Mil/Home/](http://www.Lackland.Af.Mil/Home/), (accessed).

⁹¹ "Wilford Hall Medical Center Web Site, [Http://www.Whmc.Af.Mil/](http://www.Whmc.Af.Mil/)." 927 December, 2004).

⁹³ This questionnaire is available at the end of this study in Appendix 1.

1. Basic Military Training (BMT): Every enlisted person in the USAF goes through BMT at Lackland. Consequently, nearly 1,000 basic trainees graduate from the program every week. The program lasts six weeks, although the plan is to extend BMT to eight weeks. The BMT branch has two chapel buildings staffed by eight active-duty chaplains. They also make use of several classrooms on the weekends. On any given weekend, BMT serves approximately 4,000 young trainees in thirty-eight different worship services.

2. Technical Training (TT): After completing BMT, every enlisted person goes to a technical school. Several schools including the Security Forces Technical School are located at LAFB. TT has two chapels staffed with four chaplains.

3. Permanent Party Chapel: The smallest branch, permanent party chapel serves the religious needs of the people who are permanently assigned to LAFB. Six chaplains minister here.

Additionally, two chaplains serve as the leadership team. This is the area of ministry where I serve. I currently minister as the deputy Wing Chaplain.

Another characteristic of LAFB that makes it a unique place for this focus group is the tremendous diversity evidenced in its mission. On any given weekend, LAFB holds approximately fifty different worship activities—including contemporary Christian worship services, Jewish Sabbath services, Catholic masses, Mormon worship services, Islamic prayer services, Buddhist prayer circles, and even Wiccan education classes. For

a confined community, LAFB provides unparalleled opportunities to study the subject of pastoral counseling in a pluralistic setting.

Moreover, LAFB is unique because of the tremendous diversity of the chapel staff. With nearly fifty different worship opportunities each week, the staff of the chapel must be very diverse as well. The chapel staff consists of liturgical chaplains (Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist), Free Church chaplains (Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Evangelical), Pentecostal chaplains (Assembly of God, Pentecostal churches), two Roman Catholic priests, one Greek Orthodox priest, one Muslim imam, and one Rabbi. The staff of LAFB is arguably more diverse than the local ministerium of a small city.

In conducting this focus group, I chose a select group of four to six active-duty chaplains who are first-term chaplains with no prior military chaplain experience, stationed at LAFB for a minimum of six months.

In looking over the chapel roster, I noted that seven chaplains would fit these three criteria by spring 2004, the anticipated time of the focus group. Each potential subject would be asked to fill out a questionnaire, which would ask questions about their background, age, education and experience, especially as it pertains to the counseling ministry.⁹³ I interviewed each chaplain for approximately twenty minutes in order to establish that he or she fit the criteria for the focus group. At that time, I also explained the ethical issues regarding things such as confidentiality and I asked them to sign the Statement of Informed Consent.⁹⁴

At the time of this initial interview, I assured the participants that the information gathered in the focus group would be confidential, but that the group could not promise

⁹⁴ A copy of the informed consent form is available in Appendix 2.

true anonymity. I explained the differences between confidentiality and anonymity. Morgan points out that “few focus group projects qualify as offering true anonymity. Instead it is more common to promise confidentiality, which means that identifying information will be gathered, but it will be carefully protected.”⁹⁵

After the initial interviews were completed, and I had a firm roster of interested, eligible subjects, I planned a time and place for the focus group. The focus group was recorded, both with audiotape and with videotape. I provided snacks, coffee and soda. The location was a conference room at the headquarters chapel building, across the hall from my office.

Before the focus group began, I explained the group’s operating procedure. Participants were encouraged to be comfortable and open, which led to their feeling free to express their opinions. A policy of non-attribution was explained. We asked that all cell phones, pagers, blackberries, and other electronic devices be turned off. We met once as a group for approximately seventy-five minutes.

As stated, my research questions focus on whether incoming AFCs are well-prepared to do military counseling. In order to determine the answer to this question, I asked the following questions:

1. Did your seminary/graduate school prepare you for the kind of counseling that you are now doing?
2. Is the kind of counseling you are now doing different than the kind of counseling you did before entering the military? If so, how?
3. What surprises you about the kinds of counseling you are doing?
4. What are the most difficult counseling situations you encounter?

⁹⁵ Krueger and Morgan, 87-88.

5. What, if anything, do you wish you could have done differently before coming into this career field?

Study Subjects

This study focused on the experiences of five active-duty chaplains. Their biographical information is listed below.

Chaplain A is our oldest subject. He is a forty-year-old United Methodist chaplain. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Theory from Mississippi State University in 1986. This degree required him to take a basic psychology course. Some time after graduation, he elected to attend Wesley Theological Seminary, earning a Master of Divinity degree in 1992. While a student at Wesley Theological Seminary, Chaplain A took three counseling courses and completed a half unit of CPE. This subject has the most practical experience, having been a parish pastor for twelve years. Three of those years were pre-ordination and involved a “circuit” ministry to three smaller churches.

Chaplain B is our next subject and our only female subject. She is a thirty-seven-year-old minister in the Assembly of God denomination. This particular subject has had a fairly extensive military background, having been an enlisted dental technician for a number of years. While she was active duty, she earned an Associate’s degree from the Community College of the Air Force in Dental Hygiene. She went on to study at Wayland Baptist, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Social Services. This degree involved taking approximately three classes in psychology, sociology, and other human sciences courses. She then studied at the Assembly of God Theological Seminary in Missouri, where she earned both a Master of Divinity degree

and a Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree in 2002. Chaplain B reports that she took several counseling classes involving crisis counseling, pastoral counseling, death and dying, and marital counseling.

Chaplain C is an Orthodox Rabbi and, at 28, is both our youngest and our most inexperienced subject. He has a strong undergraduate education, having earned a Bachelor of Science degree with honors from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It was while studying space and astrophysics at MIT that our subject had an epiphany—there must indeed be some kind of force behind this complex universe. This led him to study Talmudic Law at Ohr Somayach Tenenbaum Education Center.⁹⁶ Chaplain C earned a Master's degree in Talmudic Law in 2002, then did further non-degree study at the Chofetz Chaim of Radam Education Center of Monsey, New York. Of great interest to me is the fact that, in all his education, he had no counseling education.

Chaplain D is a chaplain endorsed by the Evangelical Congregational Church. This particular chaplain is our newest subject chaplain on staff, having been active duty for less than six months. Before coming to the Air Force to share his gifts and abilities, he served for five and a half years as a parish pastor in Pennsylvania. Educationally, he has a Bachelor's degree in accounting from Eastern University in Pennsylvania. He started seminary right after graduation; he was awarded a Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in 1999. He went on to study counseling, in hopes of earning a second Master's degree. However, his plans changed when he joined the Air Force as a chaplain. In his first Master's program, Chaplain D reports that he received less than two counseling classes.

⁹⁶ More information about the school can be found at <http://www.ohrsomayach.edu>.

Chaplain E is a 36-year-old Muslim chaplain. He has been active for a little more than two years. He came into the military with very little practical ministry experience. He never held a paid position in a religious institution before coming into the military, although he did some volunteer work as a student. Academically, Chaplain E has a strong background. His undergraduate degree from Wright State University was in science education; he originally intended to be a high school science teacher. After graduation, he earned a Master of Education degree at Central State University. It was at this point in his life that Chaplain E decided to pursue a calling in the Islamic ministry. This entailed a four-year program, at the Graduate School of Islamic Social Sciences, which led to a Master of Science in Islamic Studies. This degree is the equivalent of a Master of Divinity degree. During his graduate studies, Chaplain E took three counseling classes: Counseling One, Counseling Two, and Pastoral Counseling. In addition, he completed two years of CPE.

As one can see from this breakdown of our five subjects, I was privileged to work with chaplains representing three major religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) and representing a wide array of educational backgrounds. These five chaplains represent three major religious traditions and are widely representative of the diversity that flavors the United States military as well as the religious landscape of America today.

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on a set group of young chaplains currently stationed at LAFB. However, by definition this study is limited to chaplains stationed at LAFB. As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, to minister at LAFB is to minister in a very

unique situation. Therefore, the results of this study may not be representative of the experiences of Air Force chaplains across the board.

Further, the dynamic is constantly changing, as a result of the constantly changing military personnel. In the early stages of their career, most chaplains will move every three years. Of the seven chaplains eligible for this study, four will move in the next year. If this study were to be redone in a couple years, one would anticipate a vastly different demographic. In the USAF, there are currently over seven hundred chaplains from Christian, Jewish and Muslim backgrounds.⁹⁷ It would be beyond the limits of this study to study all chaplains in the Air Force, or even all chaplains coming into the Air Force. Therefore, this study was limited to several chaplains currently stationed at LAFB, in San Antonio, Texas.

⁹⁷ *Chief of Air Force Chaplain's Web Site*, (accessed), *Us Air Force Chaplain Service Web Site*, (accessed).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Our focus group met on June 29, 2005, at 1:30 PM. We met in a conference room at the headquarters building. All five chaplains who had volunteered to be a part of the study group were present. The discussion started about ten minutes late because Chaplain A was detained in an emergency counseling case.

The group began with the moderator (me) explaining the ground rules and laying out the reasons for the focus group. The group was told that we would have an informal, free-flowing discussion. The members were assured that their names would not be used in the text, but they would be identified as Chaplain A, B, C, D, or E. They were further told that they would be described using their religious background and perhaps something like where they were from originally. This seemed to put the group at ease.

The group was told that the text of the dissertation would be made available to them when it was finished. It was emphasized, though, that the format would be electronic rather than hard copy, since the anticipated length of the dissertation would probably reach one hundred and forty pages. They were reminded that this focus group would be the basis for the dissertation phase of this degree. They were told that they were selected for this group based on the fact that they are first-term chaplains, with no prior military chaplaincy experience.

The members of the group were provided with an assortment of soft drinks, ice, and a bowl of fresh fruit. This was provided in order to set a more casual, informal tone for our discussion.

In the course of our ninety-minute discussion, five distinct themes seemed to emerge. First, there was a general sense of frustration with the Air Force chaplaincy as a task far too large for the number of chaplains assigned. Second, chaplains are greatly confused over the legal responsibilities of confidentiality. Third, the chaplains clearly recognized that religious pluralism (including unbelief) complicated the task and goals of counseling. Fourth, the group felt that they were inadequately prepared for the counseling that they would do as AFCs. And fifth, some unique challenges and opportunities came with the call to the military chaplaincy.

Theme One: General Ministry Frustration

The first of the underlying themes that the focus group emphasized was the idea that all these chaplains were frustrated with certain aspects of the military chaplaincy. Perhaps most clearly frustrating for this group is the perception that the military is sometimes a place where people who need special assistance can be lost in the crowd. This theme was clear from the comments of Chaplain A, who expressed his frustration at being unable to help a particular airman because the system was such that the airman's problem, the illegal use of drugs, was a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and, as such, it was an issue that the Air Force would deal with by out-processing the airman. In other words, this particular airman could not be helped with his problem and stay in the USAF. The two were incompatible. This frustrated more than one young chaplain.

Along that same line, every one of these newly-minted Air Force chaplains expressed frustration that they were unable to resolve some problems. This came through in a number of conversations. For example, Chaplain E, when asked what his most

difficult counseling situations were, immediately mentioned that he feels very inadequate when no ready answer can be found for a dilemma.

Of course, this frustration is no different than that experienced by a pastor in a civilian parish who finds that people come to him or her with issues and problems that do not have an answer. Part of the dynamic in this situation is that the chaplain cannot know all the answers to all of life's questions. Instead the chaplain, as a pastoral counselor, helps people come to see the problem, not as a vexation, but as something coming into their lives that can help them grow spiritually.

These chaplains are frustrated because they feel that the Air Force is sometimes unable, or unwilling, to help out airmen whose problems seems rather minor, but who are caught up in a system that neither helps nor cares about their situation. And the system does not allow the airmen to grow.

For example, Chaplain A talked about how the military is systemically different than the outside world. He used the example of a new Military Technical Instructor that I counseled with Chaplain A last summer. The presenting problem was that this "Instructor in Training" hated his new job and wanted to return to his previous job. Chaplain A pointed out that, in the local church, this could have been accommodated—people quit their jobs and find another jobs more to their liking. But this is not an option in the military. In the military, if someone has a particular skill and has received a certain amount of training in a given field, it is impossible to change to a different job. This, Chaplain A pointed out, puts the chaplain in the difficult position of having to tell a large number of troops that their problem is basically unsolvable—that they have no choice but to soldier on in the career field that they hate.

The idea that some problems in the Air Force are unsolvable is more than just skin deep, however. This difference permeates the entire culture of the military. Deployments, PCS's, and personal restrictions are just some of the issues of military life, in which personnel have little or no input. For this reason, much of the counseling that military chaplains do is different than what might be done in the outside world. Sometimes the answer is: "There really is no answer. You are stuck."

Chaplain E concurred, saying that he feels worst about his counseling when he is unable to help. He referenced the case of a young girl who ran away from her home after she became pregnant. The military father came to the chaplain asking for help, but this particular chaplain felt like he was unable to help because there was no real solution to the counseling case. Perhaps the father wanted a laundry list of what he should do on a practical level, but the chaplain felt that he could better help the counselee by giving spiritual insight and not by simply giving advice.

Frustrations over counseling on issues without a clear answer seemed to resonate with the other chaplains in the room. Both civilian and military counselors face this problem: they do not like to be without answers.

Often, the system seems unsympathetic to the airmen's plight, but the reality is that the US military is bound by its mission, and that which does not fit into the mission is discarded. The military is becoming more flexible, but sometimes the chaplain is put in the tenuous position of acting as an apologist for the Air Force hierarchy, and this can be a frustrating place to be.

Another way that counseling is frustrating for Chaplain A is that his counseling now adheres to a different set of legal rules than were operative when he was in the

civilian parish. He pointed out, for example, that the illegal use of drugs by a parishioner in the civilian world might have prompted him as a pastor to refer to a helping agency or to take the person to the emergency room. But Chaplain A as chaplain is working within the confines of the UCMJ, and, as such, he would be unable to help a drug-addicted individual. Active duty military personnel live under two sets of laws: the laws of the state/country and the laws of the military. And in the military, even if a person self-identifies with a drug problem, the military will work to remove him from the organization. Of course, this puts the chaplain in a difficult ethical conundrum because he is duty-bound to uphold the UCMJ, in as far as the limits of confidentiality allow.

As Chaplain A spoke, he mentioned that, in a similar vein, he hates to do counseling with a troop who is in trouble with the commander because the chaplain is not really able to act as an advocate. He referenced an instance in which he tried to be an advocate for a troop who was in trouble with the commander, but before the chaplain was able to sit down and talk to the commander, the commander had made the decision to discharge the Airman.

Part of the dynamic here might have to do with Chaplain A needing to act in a more timely fashion. Chaplain A is not as experienced as some other chaplains, and he gives the impression of feeling uncomfortable at being taken out of his comfort zone. This is a normal and natural reaction.

Chaplain B concurred, and talked about how emotional counseling can sometimes be. She feels that when she does counseling back-to-back for a long period of time, the juxtaposition of problems causes her anxiety. For example, she sees someone struggling with a grief issue, then she does wedding preparation, then meets with someone in crisis,

and then goes to give an invocation at a retirement. That kind of schedule is particularly taxing for her. And in the ministry, a clergyperson is called upon to “rejoice with those who rejoice and grieve with those who grieve” (Romans 12:15).⁹⁸ But sometimes we are called upon to do both at the same time.

Chaplain B went on to say that the issues she struggles with most are the ones in which a counselee feels completely alone and has a problem to which the military would not be sympathetic. She became emotional about the issue, as if she were frustrated and wished there were some way to help people who have issues that are almost beyond the chaplain’s role to address.

Again, this gets back to the theme of frustration in counseling—those cases that frustrate chaplains the most are the ones in which they are unable to help resolve a situation. Of course, the goal of pastoral counseling is not necessarily to help people resolve the issue at hand; the goal of pastoral counseling is to help people discover what God is doing in their lives through this situation.

Lastly, Chaplain C spoke of how frustrating it is to try to help someone who is captured in an administrative web, blocked by the bureaucracy that comes with a giant organization like the USAF. This issue is similar to the one raised by Chaplain A, who talked about the frustration of being unable to advocate for a person. But the rabbi’s point was that at times the military system itself becomes a burden on its members, and someone gets lost in the complex bureaucracy. To Chaplain C, this is the most difficult counseling.

The obvious common thread here, as was mentioned earlier, is the frustration that comes from sitting across from an anxious counselee, and having to tell him or her that

⁹⁸ Romans 12:15 NASB

you, the counselor, do not have an answer. This seems to bother these young counselors more than it does more seasoned counselors. Perhaps the more seasoned counselor has a greater understanding of the institution and can more easily find help for struggling counselees.

Or perhaps it is something altogether different. Perhaps the more seasoned chaplains have become accustomed to their role, not of being the answer person, but of being the sounding board, the emotional repository of anger, resentment and angst.

Earlier in this dissertation, pastoral counseling was defined as *the act of entering into relationship with another person for the purpose of helping that other person develop ways to take responsibility for his or her own life and actions and to grow to be a more committed, mature Christian*. If this definition holds, then a counselor can feel confident that he or she has helped a client, even though that client may walk away from the exchange unsure that he or she have been helped. The simple act of helping someone grow to be a more committed, mature Christian is indeed a successful achievement in pastoral counseling, even if the presenting problem does not go away.

So how should young chaplains address their concerns when they feel that they are unable to help a given counselee? Perhaps the simple fact that the counselee is heard and challenged in their thinking can be considered a legitimate, honest success. Second Corinthians 1:3-4⁹⁹ comforts us that problems enter in with the sole intent of helping us develop skills that can be used to help others.

⁹⁹ Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NASB

Theme Two: Confusion over Confidentiality

Another theme that came through in the focus group had to do with the obvious confusion these chaplains had with the military's policy on confidentiality. Of course, all new accession chaplains receive a briefing, at the Chaplain Basic Course, on the Air Force's policy on chaplain confidentiality. But once a new chaplain begins to get involved in the life of a squadron, some very serious issues can come to the chaplain's attention, and issues of confidentiality can become muddled. It appears that there is a fair amount of confusion about the issue of confidentiality in the minds of these new chaplains. This will be further addressed in our next section.

Each of the chaplains expressed roughly the same conundrum: when is confidentiality iron-clad, and when does a chaplain need to consider talking to someone else about a particular issue? And compounding this issue is the culture of the military, which expects that "what is said to a chaplain stays with the chaplain".

Further conversation included discussion of the unique characteristic that the chaplain brings to the table, and it quickly became obvious that confidentiality is one of the most important things that sets chaplains apart from social workers, the Family Life Center, and the counselor at Life Skills. All these different agencies come to their counseling with a very limited definition of confidentiality, but the counselee comes to the chaplain with an iron-clad guarantee that what is said to the chaplain remains with the chaplain. This policy has virtually no exceptions. A copy of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains' policy letter on confidentiality is contained in Appendix Three.

This issue of confidentiality really enlivened the discussion. One chaplain made the comment that “that is the big thing that makes the chaplaincy goes ‘bang’ in the Air Force—confidentiality....they look at us as a safe-haven counselor.”

Of course, chaplains come to the Air Force from the real world, in which lawsuits seem to settle matters more than policy letters from some chaplain in Washington, DC. But the Air Force has, so far, had an unblemished record of protecting a counselee’s right to confidentiality in the chaplain’s office.

Theme Three: Challenge of Pluralism and Unbelief

Another theme that surfaced a number of times had to do with faith. Chaplain C expressed this well when he said, “People come to me, not because they are particularly interested in issues of faith; they come because they think I can help get them out of trouble.” Each of these pastors faces the same struggle at times—to be people of faith, providing pastoral counseling to people who are not particularly religious.

Those of us from an Evangelical church background come to counseling with a desire to help the counselees come to see their personal need for a relationship with Jesus Christ. But some of the members of this focus group do not come from the same theological position. As we have stated, two of the members are not from Christian churches. They are Jewish and Muslim clergymen.

So how do spiritual counselors, both Christian and non-Christian, work in a government environment where people from various religious traditions, or no religious tradition, come for help? This is the frustration voiced by each of these pastors. This frustration became a theme throughout the focus group.

The rabbi in the group pointed out that, in his tradition, religious leaders are not really expected to be pastoral counselors, as such, but rather are expected to act as a source of wisdom and advice. He emphasized that his graduate school offered no training in counseling, but it did help the potential rabbis develop a deeper spiritual life that would help them act as wise men when they were in ministry. Wisdom was a theme of many of his comments. For the rabbi, religion was one subject, and counseling/psychology/human development was another, totally different subject. He emphasized that, in his tradition, he was sought out because of his religious training. Evidently, a Jewish individual struggling with a personal problem comes to the rabbi for wisdom, advice, and sometimes even adjudication, but would seek out a professional therapist for counseling.

One telling comment by this rabbi was that the keeping of the Law is foundational to health and happiness. "It is like the traffic laws; if everyone obeys the traffic laws, everyone is safer and happier," he said. The clear implication was that his job, as a rabbi, was to help his constituents learn to obey the law, both the biblical law and the law of the land. Consequently, he addressed his position in the military and how that has changed drastically from his time in a civilian setting. Basically, as a clergyperson in the outside world, he had a particular position of honor in his community; people looked up to him and came to him for spiritual advice and for ethical direction. He went so far as to say that because he is an intelligent, educated person (with an undergraduate degree in astrophysics from MIT), he has a secure and respected place in the Jewish world.

In the Air Force, by contrast, he finds that people often seek him out only after their problems have become insurmountable. Instead of helping young men and women

on their spiritual journey, he finds that he devotes most of his counseling to addressing personal and relationship issues. He bemoans the fact that few of his clients come with much of a spiritual base at all. They come looking more for someone to do secular counseling than strictly religious counseling.

Which gets to the heart of the question that is being asked, “Is the kind of counseling you are now doing different than the counseling you did in your civilian setting?” This particular chaplain, more than any other in the group, said that not only is the counseling different, but also that the clients are different and that his role is different.

As an example, he pointed out the story of an airman who came to see him because of a relationship problem. The airman had been dating a girl, and she became pregnant. They married, but then, two years after the baby was born, it was learned that his new wife had actually been quite promiscuous, and there was real question as to whether the new husband was really the father. One can only imagine the culture shock that this Orthodox rabbi must be facing in his new calling as an Air Force chaplain.

Such epiphanies are not all that uncommon for new chaplains in the military. *This is a different world; it is considerably different than the more sheltered environments in which they lived and studied and it is a world that is not often sympathetic or understanding of a spiritual/religious mindset.*

Another area in which this is evident revolves around the use of alcohol. In the military, drinking too much over the weekend is almost a badge of honor or something that is common enough to be considered the norm. But in Judaism, overindulging in the use of alcohol reflects poorly on one’s family. The comment that was made by the rabbi,

in parody, was “Your parents must not have loved you very much! They did not do a very good job of raising you up to know the difference between right and wrong!”

At this point, Chaplain E, the Muslim chaplain pointed out that, in his context, the use of alcohol, in any way, was considered absolutely wrong. This chaplain will not eat rum cake, and the idea of intentionally consuming an alcoholic drink, and then bragging about it, is completely foreign. He faces tremendous culture shock in his new calling as an Air Force chaplain dealing with a completely different culture.

Theme Four: Inadequate Preparation

Still another theme that arose from the discussion was the conviction that the best kind of training is on-the-job training. This came through in several of the comments that the chaplains made. For example, when pressed on what he would have preferred to do to prepare himself before coming into the chaplaincy, Chaplain C mentioned right away that no matter how much training he could have received and no matter how long he might have ministered in a civilian setting, nothing could have prepared him for his current calling except on-the-job training.

Chaplain E began the discussion by mentioning that his graduate school education only included two counseling classes, and both dealt with counseling from a uniquely Islamic perspective. But he pointed out that he learned most of what he knows about counseling from the two units of CPE that he earned after graduate school. In addition, he volunteered to do counseling, first at the Islamic Cultural Center and later in an Alcoholic’s Anonymous group. It was Chaplain E’s belief that the practical experience of counseling with people who were in crisis was more helpful than the graduate school classes.

Likewise, one cannot learn to minister and counsel military people unless one actively, regularly counsels military people. One might argue that counseling is counseling, marriage problems are the same in or out of the military, and financial problems are parallel for civilians and for military members. There may be some truth to this, but the reality is that, until one wears the uniform of a particular branch of the service, one really cannot understand the stresses and the temptations of military life.

This idea was reiterated a number of times by the other chaplains. For example, one chaplain made the comment that, ten years ago, he could not have known what to do to prepare for his current ministry because he had no idea what the military chaplaincy was actually like. This really is an amazing statement because Chaplain E came from an enlisted background. He knew what it was like to be a foot soldier in the military, but when it came to being a chaplain, the whole idea of how to prepare was elusive.

This points to the mysterious nature of the chaplain's work. Since everything said to a chaplain is kept in confidence, and since many foot soldiers rarely see a chaplain up close and personal, there really is an aura of mystery behind the work and the calling of a military chaplain. These realities would explain the trend among chaplain candidates to regard the preparation for the chaplaincy as a rather mysterious affair. Few civilians and few enlisted people know what a chaplain actually does all day long.

Both Chaplain A and Chaplain E pointed out that CPE was helpful to them because it allowed them the opportunity to put into practice the very things that they had learned in the classroom. They had learned theory in their class setting, but practical experience was more helpful.

Chaplain D talked about how he discovered that the more education he had, the more he realized that he was inadequately prepared. He went so far as to say that after he finished his Master of Divinity degree, he felt prepared to go into the military chaplaincy. But after he completed twenty hours of Marriage and Family Therapy, post-M.Div, he realized how much more he had to learn. To this participant, the six hours of counseling class time that he received, in the midst of hours of study leading up to his Master of Divinity, was woefully inadequate. It may even be said that the smattering of training he received only served to make him *overconfident*, without the requisite education, to be a really effective counselor.

Chaplain B mentioned that her experience as a chaplain candidate and her prior military experience as a non-commissioned officer gave her some special preparation for the ministry that she would eventually enter into full time. For her, the practical experience of dealing with military members on a one-on-one basis was what best prepared her.

Chaplain E pointed out the same thing. As a young imam, he found that people would often come to him to talk about what was lawful and what was unlawful. Wanting “more action”, he went to his supervisor and asked to be given some of the counseling cases that were more realistic and more “where the action is”. Consequently, his supervisor put him into a group that worked with Alcoholics Anonymous. For a young Muslim clergyman accustomed to preaching on the evils of alcohol, this was evidently an eye-opening experience and, undoubtedly, prepared him for his eventual service in the USAF.

In answer to the question about how to effectively prepare for a career as an Air Force chaplain, two chaplains said that it could not be done outside the military context because the military is just too different from the civilian world. They felt that, when they first entered the military, they were either too young or they were simply too inexperienced in military life to be able to comprehend effectively the import of being a military chaplain.

Perhaps they were too inexperienced. An article from *The Journal of Psychology and Judaism* pointed out that young Israeli military members, when surveyed about what they value in a military chaplain, mentioned overwhelmingly that one characteristic they felt was vital was experience. Those young (eighteen to twenty-two-year-old) soldiers valued a chaplain who was more their parents' age; anyone younger would not have the requisite life experience, they reasoned.¹⁰⁰

Another chaplain commented that it was a good idea for chaplains to come to their ministry by way of the Chaplain Candidate program. The Chaplain Candidate program is designed to bring a seminary student to a military base, to work in the chapel for the summer. This gives the student the opportunity to check out the military while the military checks out the student. It provides on-the-job training. Many active-duty chaplains do come to the military chaplaincy through the candidate program, however, ironically, only one of the chaplains in this focus group started out as a candidate.

It should be noted, however, that chaplain candidates are not permitted to counsel. Because of the issue of confidentiality, counseling is reserved for those who are ordained, commissioned, and have been accepted into the Air Force as a chaplain.

¹⁰⁰ Stanley Schneider, "The Chaplain/Rabbi as a Reducer of Stress," *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* 13 (1989): p. 59.

Theme Five: Unique Opportunities and Challenges

Nearly all members of the military live apart from their biological families. When problems arise, they seek out people they can trust, and that usually means someone else in uniform. Unless they are part of “the club”, military people will not open up to a civilian in the same way that they will open up to a military member who wears the same uniform, is part of the same squadron, deploys, and serves beside them.

One clear trend was a feeling that a chaplain could not fully prepare for military ministry fully before entering the military for the simple reason that he or she could not have a parallel experience. In other words, one has to become a part of the system before one can really understand the system.

Perhaps because we were changing directions a bit, the group became more animated and began to joke around and kid each other. I think they were really anxious for this kind of an introspective question. And the answers came fast and with conviction.

Chaplain D pointed out that authenticity is more evident in the military than in the local church. He believes that people who come to the chaplain tend to be far more real and genuine, and they tend to talk more about real problems than they did when he was a pastor in Pennsylvania. Authenticity was important to him. He talked about sexuality and how that is an issue that people in the church are reticent to talk about. The people in his squadron, however, are ready and willing to talk about this issue because it is foremost on their minds.

Chaplain B expanded on this by pointing out that because we wear the same uniform as they do, military people tend to come to us and expect an immediate bond

between us. Her point was that we understand their problems because, as she said, “What other job will put you in prison for being late for work?” She also sees the chaplain’s counseling role from a sociological perspective; we understand the culture, and we are, indeed, a part of the culture. This gives us a unique place in the life of the squadron and in the life of the people who come to us for help.

Chaplain C was surprised at how much of his counseling takes place outside the office. As in the other branches of the military, the Air Force chaplaincy has a strong tradition of visiting the troops in their work centers. For many chaplains, this practice is a little difficult because it takes a certain personality to walk up to a perfect stranger and engage them in conversation. The rabbi expressed some great reservations in this area, and even referred to this as “bothering people at work”. Even so, he said that he is surprised at how many people engage him in meaningful conversation.

The effectiveness and the theory of work-site visitation is out of the scope of this particular dissertation, but it is important to note that, for some new accession chaplains, the idea of doing counseling in the work site is unique, and maybe a little frightening. But it is part of the culture of the military to “talk it over with the chaplain”.

Chaplain D returned to the idea of authenticity again, making the point that he is often surprised by the fact that people come to the chaplain with an assumption that the chaplain will be able to help them and will keep what they say in confidence. This willingness to be so transparent and so authentic surprised this particular chaplain.

Not surprisingly, one of the chaplains mentioned the quantity of counseling that he is doing now far surpasses the quantity he did as a pastor of a local congregation. It

seemed like everyone nodded in agreement to that statement. These new chaplains are almost overwhelmed with the amount of counseling they are asked to do.

It should be noted that the five chaplains who were part of our focus group worked in the Permanent Party and Technical Training branches of the base; none was currently involved in the Basic Military Training (BMT) branch. The BMT branch is the branch most associated with large amounts of counseling. The trainees in this branch are brand new accession military members going through BMT. It is not at all uncommon for chaplains there to see one counselee after another, in twenty minute blocks, for four hours a day.

Although none of these chaplains is involved in the most rigorous counseling branch on base, they still feel overwhelmed with the counseling load. All agreed that this is vastly different than the kind of ministry that they are accustomed to doing.

Sub-Theme: Female Chaplains

With the focus group discussion coming to a close, and the time about up, the question was asked, “What else do you think would be important to include in this dissertation?” The answer came from the only female in the group, who said that it would be helpful to include something in the dissertation “from a female perspective.” When asked to expand on this comment, she pointed out that females face some unique challenges in the world of the military. For one thing, there seems to be a perception that, no matter how well educated they might be, females will simply not be as capable, as prepared, or as knowledgeable as males. In addition, she pointed out that the military is a

predominantly male-oriented culture. (The Air Force is 80 percent male and 20 percent female.)¹⁰¹

Conversely, she pointed out that sometimes being a female chaplain works to her advantage. For example, if a female client comes into the chapel and sees another female, there can be an immediate bond. Not only that, but this particular chaplain presents a positive role model--someone who is professional, capable and articulate. As an enlisted troop, she looked up to female officers. Now, she finds herself actually being a female officer. She feels she is providing an important, positive role model.

The focus group ended positively, with everyone talking, laughing and apparently encouraged. We were together for about ninety minutes, and we covered five questions with some amount of depth. This was a profitable and useful exercise.

¹⁰¹ Force, Fact Sheet of the Secretary of the Air Force. Single sheet.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This study has explored the preparedness of new accession Air Force chaplains with regard to their counseling ministry. My statement of purpose is first made on page five of this document:

This study will focus entirely on the preparedness of the first lieutenant and captain chaplains who are currently in their first duty assignment. I am studying company grade Air Force chaplains because I want to find out how much formal training they have in the area of counseling in order to understand how the Air Force can provide meaningful continuing counseling education. The purpose of this study is to examine how prepared first term, Company Grade Air Force chaplains are for the continuing ministry they confront in their assignment at Lackland Air Force Base.

This is an important question for the Air Force to address, and ultimately for the faith community to address. Hundreds of thousands of teenagers graduate from our high schools every year, and a certain percentage of them will serve their country by joining one of the branches of the military. The Air Force has a constant stream of young, impressionable airman joining their ranks every year. Every day, literally dozens of trainees come to see chaplains. The question of chaplain counseling competency is vital.

In another area of the base, more people come to a different chapel, the Permanent Party chapel. These are people who are already stationed at Lackland. Most of the time, their issues have to do with marriage or family or career. But they have this in common with the trainees—they come to the chaplain looking for competent counseling.

Finally, the counseling demands at Lackland are intensified by the presence of Wilford Hall, located on the same base. It is one of the largest Air Force hospitals in the

world. Here, the chapel staff works diligently to address the needs of literally hundreds of patients, staff members, and family members. Again, the expectation is that competent, well-trained chaplains will be available.

One can readily see the huge need for competent pastoral counselors at LAFB. In addition, it should be obvious that Lackland provides the ideal “learning laboratory” for new accession chaplains. It has more Air Force chaplains on staff than anywhere else in the world. Of the 633 chaplains currently on active duty status, roughly 3.3 percent are stationed at Lackland at any given time. But one of only two Muslim chaplains is on staff, and three of twelve Jewish chaplains are on staff. No other base in the world offers such a “learning laboratory”. Our counseling ministry is huge, and the needs are sometimes overwhelming. To do this kind of study at Lackland, and to have a focus group consisting of five new Air Force chaplains from three different faiths working in this environment, has been a unique and exciting opportunity.

Although this study does not offer a definitive answer to the question of chaplain preparedness, it provides a close look at one Air Force base, during one season in that base’s life. It cannot answer the question for the entire Air Force, but it can give us a good look at what the entire Air Force might look like

Before launching on this study, I read literally thousands of pages of material on the subject. It was nearly impossible to find current, scholarly work that specifically addressed the counseling ministry of the Air Force chaplaincy. The last dissertation I was able to find that addressed this specific issue was nearly twenty years old. Clearly, it is time for the Church catholic to address this vital question.

Through the Theological Research Exchange Network, I was able to find five or six dissertations that addressed the issue in a more generic way. I was also able to find one dissertation in the Covenant Library that addressed some of my questions (Jeffrey Karl Buikema's dissertation entitled "Pastors and Premarital Counseling: a Descriptive Study of Covenant Theological Seminary Graduates from 1975-1995").

The bulk of my reading focused on the area of pastoral counseling and the art and science of training pastoral counselors. Although I could find only a couple of chaplain-specific titles, I was able to find plenty of counseling material. This material was immensely helpful in my study.

Perhaps most helpful idea from all the reading was the realization, through the writings of a number of authors, that pastoral counseling does not have to be the same as secular counseling. People should visit a pastor as someone different than a marriage counselor or a psychotherapist. Pastoral work has more to do with the development of the soul and the workings of the Spirit in the lives of people. If people know and remember this, the work of the pastoral counselor is not only profitable, it is vital to one's well being.

But just reading what other people have written would not be enough. This study went deeper, enlisting the help of five Air Force chaplains. Through a ninety-minute-long focus group, the chaplains learned about each other's strengths, each other's training, and each other's frustrations. The focus group pointed out our differences in training, in philosophy, and in experience. But more than that, it pointed out our similarities. At the end of the period, the participants seemed to go away with a feeling

that they were not alone, rather that they were in this ministry with other men and women who struggle and who have learning edges, just like they do.

The focus group highlighted several things. First, I was impressed with how much counseling these young captains do. Those who just joined from the context of the civilian parish were shocked, too, at the number of hours of counseling they are expected to do *every day*. I was reminded of my first duty assignment, at Little Rock AFB, and I remembered one day having seven counseling cases back to back. This kind of schedule is brutal, but normal.

Secondly, I recognized a trend in the frustration level of these young chaplains when it came to the oft-misunderstood subject of confidentiality. Although the chapel provides two hours of mandatory training for every staff member, more time needs to be allotted for training about confidentiality issues, and this will be one of the subjects that will be covered as a direct result of this focus group.

Thirdly, the focus group made it abundantly clear that issues of faith were high on the chaplain's agenda when the counseling session began, but it seemed like it was low on the counselee's agenda. This disconnect seemed normative across religious lines. Arguably, some people come to the chaplain, not because they have a spiritual need or a religious question, but simply because they recognize the chaplain as being a person to whom one could talk, who is able to listen, and who maybe even can help. These young chaplains learned that many of their clients were either irreligious or neutral about religion. Integrating conversations about faith and God was a challenge for these chaplains.

Discussion of Findings

When I first started thinking about writing a dissertation on the subject of counseling military members, I assumed that the chaplains would be inundated with cases involving PTSD. After all, we are in the midst of a war, and the war has been going on long enough for some soldiers to be involved, to come back, and to live in society for six months (the requisite time for PTSD to be diagnosed). But in talking with the five chaplains in my focus group, I was surprised to see that no one mentioned dealing with PTSD.

There may be a couple of reasons for this. First, LAFB is a training base. Its primary mission is to train the warriors. We get them before they go off to war, so one would expect that we would not see the prevalence of PTSD as, say, someone ministering to a group of soldiers who just came back from a deployment to the Middle East.

But only a couple of the chaplains in my focus group work extensively with trainees. At least two of the chaplains work with Permanent Party members of the base populace, and the Permanent Party members *do* deploy to the area of responsibility. However, even the members of the Permanent Party staff seem to exhibit a low incidence of PTSD.

Perhaps the reason for this is that LAFB is a training base, not a fighter or bomber base. Even the members of the Permanent Party staff who do deploy to the war zone typically deploy as security forces members, as administration and finance troops, and as support staff for the war fighter. These are the people who tend to populate the rear of the battlefield and not the front of the fight (the “Point of the Spear” in Air Force-speak).

Rather than seeing a lot of post traumatic stress, the chaplains in this focus group reported seeing clients whose stress came from the routine things of life: work schedule, child rearing issues, and marriage problems. Had this focus group taken place on a fighter base, or at a bomber wing, the story would be different, I am certain.

Of course, PTSD would seem to be less evident in the Air Force than in the Marines or in the Army, simply because the Air Force mission is so different than the missions of those two branches, which engage in direct ground action. Air Force warriors are officers flying combat aircraft above the fray of the battle. Rarely do Air Force members actually engage in hand-to-hand combat. A disproportionately high number of casualties in the Army and the Marine Corps, compared to the Air Force, is to be expected. By extension, one would expect to find a disproportionately low number of PTSD cases among Air Force members.

The Air Force chaplains who were part of my study group reported high levels of marriage counseling, work-related counseling issues, and issues related to children and child rearing. As might be anticipated, those chaplains working in the BMT side of the mission reported that a lot of their counseling is career counseling or stress counseling. But no one reported a vast amount of PTSD counseling.

A second finding of this study is that the chaplains in the focus group all appeared to be very committed to their calling and very devoted to their counseling. There was a pervasive sense that these pastors wanted to succeed and to improve their counseling. Every person mentioned that the counseling load is, at times, overwhelming, and the expectations are massive. When asked if they would take part in this study, they were all

enthusiastic, perhaps in part because they thought it would positively impact their counseling.

But their enthusiasm seemed to be tempered by their awareness that they do not have a strong counseling background. As a matter of fact, the average chaplain in the group reported taking only about three counseling classes. And one chaplain reported that he received no counselor training. With such meager preparation, it is remarkable that these chaplains are able to function at all. This is clear testament to their tenacity, their ingenuity, and, probably, their stubbornness.

The obvious need is for more counseling education, but the question is “How can busy pastors find time to get the training that they obviously need?” Of course, the Doctor of Ministry program is designed to meet that need, allowing pastors to continue in ministry, while furthering their education. Personal experience shows that this is an ideal venue to increase knowledge and deepen understanding. But the reality is that few Air Force chaplains will take the time, spend the money, and make the commitment that it takes to earn this degree.

As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the Air Force has been working with the Army to provide a select number of chaplains with the opportunity to earn a Master’s degree in community counseling. This is a fifteen-month-long program that involves moving to one of two universities, studying full time, and committing to perform three hundred hours of one-on-one, supervised counseling. The idea of this program is to produce a cadre of trained pastoral counselor/chaplains who will be able to go back to their units and train other chaplains.

I highly recommend the community counseling program for several reasons. First, it allows the chaplains to train and practice with military people and thereby experience the exact kinds of counseling cases they will encounter when they go back to the field. Secondly, the academic training allows the chaplain to dig deeper and to become not just more proficient but also more qualified. The program is designed to allow the graduate to take the Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) written test and become a licensed MFT. Eventually, with enough supervised hours, the chaplain should be able to become a certified MFT.

But the object of the program is not to turn out MFTs. Rather, the object of the program is to train chaplains to train other chaplains. In the Army, where the model was developed, the graduate chaplain goes to a large active-duty Army base and becomes a specialized professional, an Army Family Life Chaplain. The task of the Army Family Life Chaplain is to train other Army chaplains. Ideally, the Family Life Chaplains are guarded from extraneous details that would keep them from their primary task, which is counseling and counselor training.

This system has worked with some limited success in the Army. The biggest complaint from the Family Life chaplains is that commanders sometimes pile additional duties on them, and they are not able to do what they have been trained to do--counsel and train others. This aside, the Army is to be commended for their program, and the Air Force would be well advised to emulate the program.

In the recent round of Base Realignment and Closure recommendations, it was decided that the Air Force chaplain school, located at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama, and the Army chaplain school, located at Fort Jackson in South Carolina,

would join together and train both Army and Air Force chaplains. This training would be for initial accession chaplains as well as for continuing education for both branches. This plan will probably be completed by 2008.

This training in a joint environment sets the stage for chaplain counseling training to take place. As a matter of fact, Shaw AFB is located just a few miles from Fort Jackson and might make an ideal location for a third Army Family Life Training program. Ideally, Air Force chaplains would be encouraged to attend this program and counsel with Air Force families.

At the base level, it would be ideal to make use of the chaplains who receive this specialized training to mentor other Air Force chaplains. In the past, the training that has been provided has not been fully utilized. After spending fifteen months receiving updated counselor training, chaplains are finding that they are put back into the mainstream of the assignment system. A better plan to utilize these chaplains is needed. It would seem logical to station a trained Family Life chaplain at some of our larger bases, like Lackland in Texas, Ramstein in Germany, and Kadena in Japan with the expressed purpose of training other chaplains. This might be a good area for further study.

As I draw this study to an end, I feel compelled to recommend a concerted plan to make pastoral counselor training a higher priority in the Air Force. This study has shown that, at least at my base, in my local context, young chaplains are anxious to do better at counseling, but they lack the tools and the education to help them grow. Leaving the ministry for an extended period of time does not seem like a viable answer. With these limitations in mind, I would recommend a three-step process to address the problem:

1. A three-day, Professional Continuing Education (PCE) module should be established at Maxwell AFB, the Chaplain Service Institute for the Air Force. This PCE would be targeted at field grade officers, whose ranks would be majors and lieutenant colonels. The class would be three days long and would cover chaplain mentoring in the area of counseling.
2. At the end of the three-day class, these more seasoned chaplains would be encouraged to go back to their respective bases and enter into a mentoring relationship with one or two younger chaplains. Although not a formal mentoring situation, it would be hoped that the relationship might blossom into a time of teaching, spiritual direction, and pastoral care for the young chaplain who is working to become a better counselor.
3. As part of the mentoring program, several texts would be required reading, to help the young chaplain learn to be a better counselor. Texts could include David Benner's *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, Charles Kollar's *Solution Focused Pastoral Care*, and Brian A. Child's *Short Term Pastoral Counseling*.

Providing an intentional system of pastoral counselor training is necessary if the Air Force is to address the issue of new accession chaplains coming in who do not possess the proper skill sets needed to do the kinds and the volume of counseling expected of them. Making use of older, more experienced chaplains seems to be the best way to help our new chaplains become proficient counselors.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

This has been a fairly thorough study of one period of history at one Air Force base. It is not intended to be exhaustive. But dissertations are not designed to be end-all treatises that come to the definitive conclusion about a matter. Rather, a dissertation should be seen as a new chapter in a book that is constantly being written. In the case of a dissertation at Covenant Theological Seminary, one hopes that one's work will add to the corporate knowledge of the body of Christ. It is my sincere hope that my work adds a new chapter to the giant tome that is the work of the body of Christ. It is my further hope that future generations will add to the work that I have begun.

Clearly, more work needs to be done in the area of chaplain counseling education. If I were to continue writing, I would love to address some of the issues that chaplains typically face. For example, one could easily write a book on the subject of chaplain confidentiality. Chapters could be written on confidentiality as defined by state and local law, as defined by the military, and as understood by various religious bodies. Further study would be warranted in areas such as case law, practical out workings of the law, and the chaplain's understanding of the nuances of this fascinating subject. This kind of study would lend itself ideally to another Doctoral dissertation.

Another area I would love to explore if I had the time and energy to do it would be the area of how other support agencies on base (namely, the Mental Health and the Family Support communities) perceive chaplain counseling. Although always at a polite level, their responses seem to communicate that the professionals in these organizations

view chaplains as being nice mascots for the squadron, but really not trained to be effective counselors.

This perception could be effectively explored by putting together a focus group of fellow professionals—psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and MFT's. If they could be prodded into talking openly and freely, a profitable and insightful, if not challenging, focus group would surely be the result!

Still another area for the body of Christ to spend time is the area of chaplain educational requirements. The question to answer would be, "Should the Air Force mandate a certain number of counseling classes for its new accession chaplains?" If the Air Force did this, would other branches follow suit, or would they keep their requirements low and enjoy a surplus of eligible candidates? If the requirements for entrance into the military chaplaincy were to be raised, and if a certain number of counseling classes were required, how would this affect the recruiting of chaplain from denominations which do not have a tradition of academic scholarship? How would this affect the recruiting of non-Christian chaplains? One could compare and contrast the entrance requirements for the military chaplaincy with entrance requirements for the Veteran Administration, for hospital chaplaincy programs, and for state and federal prison chaplaincies.

In another equally rich vein, the body of Christ could explore what counseling models work well in the military context. Is Family Systems counseling best for a military community, or would something akin to Object Relations Therapy be a better fit? Given a highly transient population, how could one incorporate such counseling models? Solution-Focused Counseling seems to hold promise for some counselors; would a

counseling model such as Solution Focused Pastoral Counseling, *a la* Charles Kollar, be a workable model? Or might David Benner suggest a better alternative with his Strategic Pastoral Counseling model? How does one even measure effectiveness? Can one measure effectiveness? This subject would obviously have to be pared down before it could be effectively addressed in a dissertation.

One last subject in regard to the Air Force chaplaincy begs to be explored. Last year the Chaplain Service Institute at Maxwell AFB in Alabama started a new program whereby new chaplains were given two weeks of extra training in such things as Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), Solution Focused Counseling, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). A study could easily be made on these subjects, to determine whether two weeks of intense training is sufficient or even helpful and whether there might be a better way to help new chaplains get ready for the rigors of counseling in the military setting.

In the end, the opportunities for research on chaplain counseling ministries are nearly endless. If anything, this study highlights how little has been done in this area. Research on the effectiveness of current practice is vital if the art and science of pastoral counseling in the military context is to continue.

And continue it must—the chaplains in military communities around the world minister to literally millions of individuals and families. For them, the chaplain represents the last best hope of effective counseling.

APPENDIX 1

FOCUS GROUP PRE-SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ AGE _____

ENDORSER _____

TOTAL TIME AT LACKLAND

_____ Less than 6 months
_____ 6 months to 1 year
_____ More than 1 year
_____ More than 2 years

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Undergraduate:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| School _____ | School _____ |
| Major _____ | Major _____ |
| Degree _____ | Degree _____ |
| Year Completed _____ | Year Completed _____ |

Undergraduate Counseling Education:

_____ Less than 2 classes
_____ 2-5 classes
_____ More than 5 classes

Graduate:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| School _____ | School _____ |
| Major _____ | Major _____ |
| Degree _____ | Degree _____ |
| Year Completed _____ | Year Completed _____ |

Graduate Counseling Education:

_____ Less than 2 classes
_____ 2-5 classes
_____ More than 5 classes

Title of Counseling Classes Taken:

Full Time Ministry Experience Prior to Air Force Chaplaincy

_____ Less than 1 year
_____ 1-3 years
_____ More than 3 years

In what capacity?

_____ Pastor or assistant of a faith community
_____ Chaplain
_____ Institutional _____ Military (Branch? _____)
_____ Counselor
_____ Other (Please define _____)

Were you an Air Force Chaplain Candidate? _____ Yes
_____ No

Anything else about your previous educational or ministry experience that would be helpful to know?

☐ I have read and signed the Informed Consent Form

APPENDIX 2

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project on pastoral counseling that is being conducted by Chaplain Robert Wido for his Doctor of Ministry Dissertation at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to hold a group interview to find out about pastoral counseling; we will discuss our general ideas about the preparedness of first term chaplains to do the kinds of counseling we are asked to do for the Air Force.

I understand that the study involves a focus group interview that lasts for approximately one hour, which will be both audio taped and video taped.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the study or to leave, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanation for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study, I understand that this will have no effect on my relationship with either the Air Force or Chaplain Robert Wido, the moderator and sponsor of this study.

Though the subject matter of this focus group is professional in nature, pastoral counseling can be a personal and emotional matter. At no time will I be asked to reveal names, circumstances or other confidential information that could jeopardize the unique relationship between clergy and counselee.

I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information they share during our discussion.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and that the names of all the people in the study will be kept confidential.

I understand that I may not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, apart from food and beverages provided by the sponsor of the study. However, my participation may help others in the future.

The members of the research team have offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Today's Date

Signature

* This Consent Form is adopted in large part from David L. Morgan's *The Focus Group Guidebook*, SAGE Publications, 1998, pp. 86-87.

APPENDIX 3



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF THE CHAPLAIN SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

4 June 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM HC, DRU, FOA

FROM: AF/HC

SUBJECT: Privileged Communications with Chaplains

The privilege of having absolute and total confidentiality in communications with United States Air Force chaplains is an essential component of the chaplain's ministry.

Although the absolute policy against any *Air Force-compelled* disclosure has been in place for several years (see AFM 52-103, Atch 10), some have questioned whether chaplains may exercise their own personal or professional discretion in disclosing information received in the course of practicing their ministry. The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the nature and scope of the privilege of confidentiality.

The privilege of absolute confidentiality in communications with chaplains belongs to *the client*, not to the chaplain. There are *no* circumstances where a chaplain can disclose information revealed in the practice of his or her ministry without the client's informed permission. Similarly, Air Force authorities will never require a chaplain to disclose privileged information for any reason whatsoever.

There should be no misunderstanding: It is the policy of the United States Air Force Chaplain Service that under no circumstances (except with the client's consent) will a chaplain ever compromise the privilege by disclosing information revealed in a confidential setting. Actions inconsistent with this policy may constitute a failure to meet Air Force standards, with resulting adverse consequences.

WILLIAM J. DENDINGER

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William J. Dendinger".

Chaplain, Major General
Chief of the Chaplain Service

APPENDIX 4

MENTORING SESSION #38

Name of Protégé _____

Name of Mentor _____

Date of Session _____

“Chaplain Supervisors should avoid entering into confidential communications with subordinates on their staff. When confidential communication is desired, staff members are encouraged to exercise such privileged communication with a chaplain outside their chain of command.” AFI 52-101, 4.1.3

PROFESSIONAL:

Core area of focus: Ministry

Subject: Privileged Communication and Legal Issues Surrounding It

Bring to the session: - AFI 52-101, Section 4.1, Privileged Communication- UCMJ, Military Rules of Evidence 503, Definition of Privileged Communication Military Rules of Evidence, 503

1) Review and discuss AFI 52-101, Section 4.1, Privileged Communication and the Military Rules of Evidence, 503.

- a. Emphasize that privileged communication belongs to the counselee, not the chaplain.
- b. Discuss what happens if a chaplain breaks the privilege (e.g. personal integrity, legal issues, Chaplain Service credibility issues, etc.).
- c. Discuss how state laws vary in regards to privileged communication in cases such as child abuse.
- d. Discuss how to respond to if called to testify in a court case (e.g. consult JAG and MAJCOM/HC).
- e. Discuss the fact that subordinates do not have confidentiality in a supervisor-subordinate relationship.

2) Discuss the chaplain's endorsing agent's expectations and personal approaches.

3) Consider having a JAG officer attend a staff meeting to discuss this issue from a legal point of view.

PERSONAL:

What are your personal concerns in maintaining privileged communication?

NEXT SESSION DATE and TIME:

APPENDIX 5

**Doctorate of Ministry
Focus Group
Robert W. Wido
Lackland Air Force Base
June 29, 2005**

Bob: My wife is here to be our videotographer and audiotographer. Hello Diane! Um, really no ground rules on our talk today. Just to remind you kind of what we're doing here is, this is the focus group that I'm going to use as part of my dissertation, my D.Min. Your names will not be used in the dissertation at all. We will....we will only make reference to chaplain A, B C D and E. I've already written up a section where I'd say something like, "Chaplain C is an evangelical captain from Pennsylvania." Just keeping it very non-descript. So no one can trace down who you are. Not that it matters because these are not really difficult questions to answer. But what I'd like to do is have a discussion and the subject matter of today's discussion is being a new accession chaplain in your first assignment, how are you finding the counseling ministry going? So that's what I'd like to focus on.

I'd like to begin by asking, do you feel, like, did your seminary or graduate school prepare you for the kind of counseling you are now doing? What do you think? Did your seminary or graduate school prepare you for the kind of counseling that you are now doing?

Chaplain E: For the school I attended, it is a requirement that you take CPE. You take, I think, two or three classes of counseling based on like the Islamic Structure also. Also secular counseling. So that they try somehow to do that, and then they try to mingle you into the, or maybe not try to mingle you, they try to force you, to volunteer with the local agencies to use some kind of counseling. Maybe it might not be as intense as a counselor, but at least to be somehow involved. So that they try to get their...push their students to do the practical things.

Bob: So in essence, before you came in, you had, not just academics in counseling, but you had some practical experience actually doing counseling.

Chaplain E: Correct.

Bob: OK.

Chaplain E: Before volunteering, in my situation, I had two years of CPE.

Bob: And CPE required you to do some on-site counseling?

Chaplain E: Correct.

Bob: OK. So do you feel like your background prepared you?

Chaplain E : I don't know.... This is my personal opinion. I think there's no way you're gonna say that I'm fully prepared for counseling of this situation, of this particular trauma, or this particular incident. I have some skills and tools to work with, and that's where the foundation at least is.

Bob: OK – someone else?

Chaplain A: I'll go ahead and speak. Did my seminary prepare me for the kind of counseling that we are doing now? I have to say yes, at that level. Again, what Chaplain E was saying is that he got the basic tools that you need. Of course nothing is going to prepare you for some of the things that we come up with, but I distinctly remember a counseling professor giving an example of something that was a real scenario, and I'm not going to go into what that was, but...it was pretty graphic, and somebody coming into an office and stating a problem that they had. And one of the students who was an older man, just went off on me because of what the situation was. You know, what the reality of that was, was that you never know what is going to hit you when they walk through that door. And there is that need to be professional and objective. They come to you for help. They didn't come to you for judgment, for the things they came for. They came to you to give some kind of help.

Bob: Sure.

Chaplain A: Now whether or not you are referring them or not, you may have to because you, back home, might not be able to do it. But that was a very key thing for me to know. But also just that the basic tools of how to do some active listening, and that sort of thing, was very key and helpful.

Bob: So that was helpful to you?

Chaplain A: Absolutely. And a lot of counseling is just that...it's listening, and giving back. For us, anyway. Then I don't know if this is part of that question or not, but going into my...in order to go on to become ordained, as an elder in my conference, after I finished seminary, I had to have a minimum of...my conference required a minimum of CPE.

Bob: So you had to have that CPE?

Chaplain A: Which I did at a hospital in Richmond, and that was a whole new experience.

Bob: Sure, I can see that. So both of you had some experience with CPE?

Chaplain C: Just an insight, the question did your seminary prepare you, but he was also an elder in his church before he went in to the ministry, so that also prepared him.

Chaplain A: That's exactly right. There's twelve years between my seminary and coming into this, so it's kind hard for me to.... Did it prepare me for what I do? I don't know, in a way, maybe it would not have, if I came in straight out of seminary.

Bob: That's why I'm anxious to ask you this second question to follow up on that. Let me follow up on that after I ask this side of the room. Did you feel like your background of seminary or graduate school prepared you for this kind of counseling? What do you think?

Chaplain D: No. Considering when I say that, after I've completed about twenty credits of marriage and family therapy, and counseling....

Bob: You had the strongest counseling background of the five of you here. I think it's interesting that you should say no. I find that insightful. Go ahead and unwrap that.

Chaplain D: Well the reason that I say it is, because after the intense marriage and family therapy courses, it is sort of like they taught you to use the tools you need to deal with crisis situations you might encounter. Whereas in seminary it was more like, "This is a hammer. This is what we can do with a hammer." But no one really showed you how to use it. Whereas in my marriage and family therapy, they said, "Okay, this is a hammer, put it in your hand and we're gonna show you how to use it. And this is how not to use it." And so...if I didn't have the marriage and family therapy counseling, I might have said yes. But knowing what something entails, the seminary counseling is not. You think out of about ninety credits, only six were required in the field of counseling....

Bob: That's pretty typical, I'm finding. Two three hour courses in counseling is the pretty standard plan.

Chaplain D: For ninety credits?

Bob: So what I hear you saying then, is if you came into this straight out of your M.Div., you would have felt prepared, but because you've studied marriage and family therapy, you realize how much you don't know?

Chaplain D: Exactly.

Bob: I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Chaplain D: You can pretty much quote it, and pretty much couch it in those terms.

Bob: Okay. Your symbolism of a hammer reminds me of a comment that one of my counseling professors made, and that was, if the only tool you have is a hammer, then everything looks like nail. And I think that that's exactly right. Okay. Chaplain B, what do you think?

Chaplain B: I was a chaplain candidate throughout my seminary career, so, therefore I had a hammer, in that I had some application for the opportunities as a chaplain candidate. Plus the required service. And then tons of experience in the enlisted side, being a counselor. I had very similar scenarios that we encountered, as chaplains. At that level you made the referral to the chaplain. But I was exposed to a lot of marital issues, workplace issues, and the like. So I think I took advantage of my chaplain candidate opportunity to kind of hone in and practice what I was learning in seminary, with the application of my prior enlisted time to help myself. Because I knew just in and of itself was not enough. I hadn't really had a similar experience. And I asked a lot of questions of the active duty chaplains that I was with. Then also working as a hospice chaplain for two years really brought to my life family dynamic issues and behavioral issues that I encountered a lot as a chaplain.

Bob: I can see that. I can definitely see that.

Chaplain B: Seminary, in itself, kind of really ignited the way for me to really come in and minister.

Bob: Okay. Rabbi, what do you think?

Chaplain C: Well, I would say that in my seminary, my *yeshiva*, did not primarily set me up for the kind of counseling that the Air Force expects me to do. But in answer to your question, there is no real official counseling credits in a *yeshiva*. The rabbi system works well on wisdom, so to say. And wisdom is usually gained over the years, a lot of times, and so if you're coming out, you have your own type of experience.

Bob: Well, that's exactly right. I was telling Rabbi, I think I gave you the article.... One of the books I'm reading for this degree, about the chaplaincy in Israel, and when they survey the young troops in Israel, and say "What do you value in a chaplain?" Overwhelmingly the comment was, "I'd like to see a chaplain who is much older than I am." Which is very different from what we have in the American chaplaincy. We try to get some of the youngest chaplains. I think you're one of the youngest chaplains in the Air Force right now. But in the Israeli way of thinking, they want somebody with experience. And I think it gets back to the old idea of wisdom. If I have a problem, I'm going to talk with someone my dad's age rather than somebody my age.

Chaplain C: There's no official emphasis put on counseling per se. It's more getting the thing in your head straight, so you can help people out.

Bob: Getting your head straight by obeying the Law.

Chaplain C: [Chuckle] By at least understanding how people work, what drives people, desire and passions, what pushes people. More of an emphasis on men's challenge in life, so to say. Obeying the law is part of that. I would put that in because by obeying the law, it leads to a happier life, so to say. It's like everybody following the rules on the highway leads to safer driving.

Bob: Sure. Absolutely right.

Chaplain C: But as far as officially, the only other thing they did, really, was they did expose us. They tried to create an awareness of just, potential disorders, so to say. Because the rabbi system doesn't really have to do with personality disorders, at least making disorders. People are confused, or lost, or struggling with something so to help them out a little bit. But as far as personality disorders, their advice is just referral. So, they just want us to be able to recognize.... "Okay, this is obsessive-compulsive disorder. And this is alcoholism, and this is this and that." To be able to identify, and actually deal with it kind of thing.

Bob : Absolutely. Okay. Good. Thank you. Let me ask my second question. And it is kind of a follow up to your comments, Chaplain A. Is the kind of counseling that you are doing now different from the kind of counseling before entering the military? If so, how? We kind of talked about this a little bit more before this started. What do you think? Is the kind of counseling you are doing now different? The people that you are seeing? The kinds of issues represented? Are they different than what you experienced?

Chaplain D: I think they are more authentic. Because coming from a faith background, coming from the parish, there is a tendency for parishioners to kind of want to not necessarily be as authentic as possible because sometimes church doesn't permit you to do that. There's too much of...that's too unholy for you to even be dealing with that. And so in the military you don't have that. Especially with the squadron.... Some of the people in the squadron, that never grew up with any kind of faith background, they are going to be as real as possible. And so in that regard, I think that's vastly different, and it's more authentic. There's really no whitewashing of any dilemma. This is what it's worth. This is what it is. And I know in the few instances I've had cases, I'm thinking to myself, there's no possible way I would have ever encountered this kind of dynamic in the church setting.

Bob: [Laughing] Well, you're right.

Chaplain D: With this authenticity, and I think that's the key word. The people that I've encountered in the Air Force are much more authentic because they don't have the stigma of "because we are persons of faith, we have to be holy, and we can't talk about these issues." For example, sexuality. When's the last time you heard a sermon on sexuality from the pulpit? That's too unholy. We can't talk about that. But yet, there are people in this world who are struggling with that issue.

Bob: That's a good point. I think, if you think of your home town. If you think some guy who works in a local factory and doesn't come to your church or your synagogue, if you think of a guy who's irreligious, your basic Fred Flintstone type of guy, if he has marriage problems, chances are not good that he's going to walk into your church and say, "Hey, Pastor, can I sit down and talk with you?" Whereas in the military, if you have a guy who works on the flight line, and he is having marriage problems, he may well call

you up and say, "Can I sit down and talk with you about my marriage problems? Not because I'm particularly religious, but because you're the guy who's in my squadron, and you're supposed to know about this kind of stuff." Well, Okay, I appreciate that.

Chaplain B: It's twofold, I think too. It's more of a sociological perspective. Their aim is at a sociological level. I had an issue with this person in this parish, trying to help you, so I told you. And then the second, I would think, is that we have something in common. You have the military. You wear the uniform. And that, I think, is comforting, because who else would face, you know, dismissal from the military, or dismissal from the chapel, being raped, or you know, not having to pay the rent on time? You get an LOC or an LOR; these are foreign terms to people, which is insightful. So we're facing, like you said, genuine issues, perspective dynamics that are different, and also sociological issues that very often get in the way. And then there's the genre of the military. So to me, that combination makes it even conditioned, but the issues are the same. It's just amplified because it is a closed environment. It's just kinda what I go by. What I think.

Bob: When Di and I first got married I think she was amazed that the culture of the military was such that if you were having trouble, or your kids were failing school, or your marriage was coming unglued.... If you had a factory downtown, the boss is probably gonna say, "It's really not my problem, do your job and keep it to yourself." But the first sergeant...the first thing he is gonna say is, "Have you talked to a chaplain about it?" And we get tons of people who have no religious background or interest or desire at all. But we see them all the time. So, what do you think, Chaplain A? Do you think that the kind of counseling you do now is the same or different?

Chaplain A: Well, I'm going to throw a wrench in this and tell you what you might not want to hear. I'm gonna tell you yes and no.

Bob: Well there's no answers that I want; I just want to learn.

Chaplain A: Yes and no. Yes, it is different because of some of the various factors that Chaplain D and Chaplain B brought up. ...is that we are being a lot more with people who, for the most part, sometimes come with no faith or very little faith background, no matter what that background may be. For instance, the sexuality issue. You ought to look at that. You're gonna get those who've been messing with suicide. More so than in a.... They are not going to be quite as quick to come to you because you are the pastor of the local church there, perhaps. And that may be ah...unless it's a desperate situation, doing that. Unless you do the kind of ministry where you are not just the pastor of that church, but you're the pastor in that you're basically the community pastor. Or chaplain. So.... The kind of ministry I've done in the twelve years prior to coming in here has been.... Basically, yes, I had my local churches, but the people in that community really knew me. And I've often had people come and talk to me that were not really from my church. And they would be a little more open to talk with me about what's going on, in marriage problems, and all that. But then you come back down to a lot of what comes into my door anyway.... I'd say the majority of what come my doors at this time is family and marital problems. And that what I did see a lot of...most of the counseling I would do. Unless it

was somebody older. Well even then I would have counseling situations where there were problems in the marriage. And while I might not see as much as in the local church, because of that "You're the pastor, and I'm not supposed to have problems. And I can't tell you my problems." When people did trust that, they would come. So I had that aspect of it.... Just prior to coming in, I had a man that went through marital breakup. Turned out he was fighting with an alcohol problem, his marriage was facing the brinks, and an eight-year affair had come out. And you know, I worried about him committing suicide. And before he got to a center, a treatment program that would at least help him with his alcohol problem and hopefully getting to some of the roots of some of the other stuff going on. And so when you're doing that kind of ministry, yes, it is the same, but from just a local church perspective, it's not. If that makes sense. There's more going on here. And you see it more day to day. But then I'm looking at it from a twelve-year perspective too.

Bob: What I hear you saying is, and all of you saying together is, your context at times is the role of church pastor. There's a sense that, if I have problems, then I must not be a real spiritual person or must not be living my faith at all. In Islam is there that sense at all, do you think?

Chaplain E: Pretty much. The big taboo that we have also. And that's what I was going to say. The culture's completely different in the military because, first of all, you have so many sub-cultures. If I want to refer to the Islamic community, for example, the taboo is like everyone said, "Can I really come with that particular issue?" and "Can I really expose that?" We can't talk about those things, especially if it was a marital situation, or an abuse situation, or my son or daughter has done something.... That's why when I get assigned to do that particular volunteering, I'm not learning anything.... "I need to go somewhere else," so I told my supervisor, and he said, "Okay, what do you want to do?" "Put me somewhere, where I can see action. I want to see those things." Because it was people just coming for religious clarification about certain things. In Islam, you want to be careful about what things are lawful, unlawful... what is permissible, not permissible. So people just only come for those things. Those things aren't great, you know? All I want to learn is how to deal with THE issues. So when I got transferred, and be working in the inner-city community, which I somehow compare that to the Air Force. You have sub-communities, different cultures, different difficulties, everything. That's where I was able to see everything real.

Bob: So that sense of authenticity that we heard over here, you experienced too?

Chaplain E: When I got assigned to work with AA people, I thought, "Oh my God. What is this?"

Bob: (laughs) That's a different experience.

Chaplain E: They'll tell you everything, oh, about the whole shebang. Especially when people talk about abuse and the like. I'm not familiar with those things. Then when you hear from the experts how to deal with it, and how to teach those classes, and how to

relate to that. And how to tell people. "I'm thinking of ending it." If you continue doing that.... Oh my God. That will not happen in my community. No way, can I tell someone, "If you continue doing that, it's...." Okay, I'm being more authentic. So coming here, in a similar culture. Well, OK. That's why, when sometimes, when we have (I don't want to make a statement, but) if someone's new in coming to work with this community in having never been exposed to it, like, how can I deal with it? What's up with these things? This guy is really slamming me with heavy duty stuff. Oh my God. And I think I brought to you a situation, a marriage situation, one time, when I got your advice from that. So I was like, "How do I deal with this?"

Bob: Sure. I think we all face that sometimes. You know, how do you deal with these kind of things?

Chaplain E: So, it was good for me to take that jump from this only being, it's like you know, being on the assembly line; to taking the different look at inner city, working with the people there. Which, really, it...somehow for me...it stirred a lot of things inside of me.

Bob: What we do is probably more like dealing with the inner city at times.

Chaplain E: At times.

Chaplain B: And getting more and more of a cross-section.

Chaplain E: More of a cross-section.

Bob: It's getting more prominent, the issues?

Chaplain B: I think more inner-city issues are surfacing. I've seen a lot of gang members. I've seen....

Bob: Have you?

Chaplain B: I think it's assuming that.... The screening process in my mind is a lot different for the military personnel. It is more of a controlled culture, I thought. And....

Chaplain A: The Army used to get those guys!

[Laughing]

Chaplain B: Yeah, the Army. They would straighten them out, you know? I see it on this side. I see two paradigms. Those who want to succeed and cannot because of economic scenarios. So they come in here to find...to a kind of identity and their self esteem. Second of which there are those that fail tremendously in the outside world and especially in sociological settings because of their habits and behavioral issues and stuff. So they come in here, and it's not being rectified. It's being amplified. And so they come in here,

and.... You know, I can't undo what society's done with their life the last eighteen years. And the furthest thing for them is a religious issue. You know: "I want to be a better person. How can I do this because I'm failing in this system?" And it's supposed to be a controlled system. And that to me is a lot different than in my church community, in Fort Missouri. It's just a dairy town, a dairy farming place. And those folks, you know, we deal pretty much with a cattle scenario, changing in the world. That was the biggest crisis, back then. And so and so's tractor burnt down. And we have to come together as a community to try to fix it. And here, you know, we're talking about folks that bombed seriously in life, and that's not compatible with being in the Air Force. "What can you do, Chaplain, to help me because if I go to these others, if I go to Life Skills, and all that, that might jeopardize my career? So I'm coming to YOU. So you help me." And I'm like, "You know, I want to, but you don't want me to use my Bible either. You want me to talk to you to aid these things on a sociological level." And I'm very prone to use my psych background and my sociological background because they don't want to hear "God," and they don't want to hear anything religious. That's different [chuckle].

Chaplain A: [Sigh] If I could add something. I remember there's another difference that I have seen, since before you came here, I believe, to be the deputy. You were over at Permanent Party. You remember the young man that came in that knew you?

Bob: Yeah. He was in Tech Training as a TI.

Chaplain A: That's right, a TI. And he realized that he didn't want to be that. Had I been in my local church, and somebody came in, and said, "I'm really not happy with my job, I can't...." I'd have expressed to him...I'd have said, "Look, look at what the options are. Where you can go from here. What do you want to do? What do you dream about?" You know, and this kind of thing, and then, "Go for it." And here, I mean, he couldn't do that. There's no option. So that, that for me...that really was the difference.

Bob: I never thought about that, but you're right. That is a difference.

Chaplain C: There are a lot of unique scenarios in the military that don't happen in the civilian world.

Chaplain A: Exactly. Exactly.

Bob: This guy was going through becoming a tech instructor and found that he hated it. He had been a chaplain assistant and wanted to get into the "real" Air Force. He jumped into being a TI, and all of a sudden he's going, "Man, these guys swear and everything." It's like, "Well, yeah, what did you expect? Welcome to the TI world." [chuckle]

Chaplain C: Deployments.

Bob: Deployments.

Chaplain C: UCMJ.

Bob : UCMJ.

Chaplain C: You know, especially when I was at BMT, and I would get people in their first week, people who volunteered to serve our country and felt like they were being treated like prisoners of war. I mean it's just a tremendous bureaucracy. You're living in a bureaucracy. And you have to deal with that yourself, and you have to know how others deal with it. And bureaucracy fights itself, and puts people in....

Bob: But there are some things that you don't deal with. And my suspicion would be if you were a clergy person on the outside world you would. For example, layoffs. Or, you know, I remember....

Chaplain B: But we have the equivalent in the military.... We have tons of military trainees who...but because they wanted desperately to come into the military, they agreed to be instructed. Now they don't have an AFSC, and they have nothing to fall back on. They're in a certain rank. There's no job openings for them. They are being told you can't cross-train in the military. Yet again, back into the economic scenario they're trying to run away from to begin with. So, yeah, we deal with layoffs, in a different way, but we deal with it.

Chaplain A: Well there are some things that come out. I tell you one of the things, if it becomes known we're not dealing with it because it could cause a problem, is, quickly, kicked out, and that is the drug problem, and that is the alcohol problem. The local community, those people, they don't get kicked out of their neighborhood. They might get thrown in jail, if they're caught. But you're still their pastor, and you're still going to the jail to visit them. Whereas in the military, for the chaplain, if they get kicked out, and they go back home, that's no longer your responsibility, Sir. That's one thing that I find, ah....

Bob: Just as an educational point, I'd ask, for those of you who are younger in the military. If a person self-identifies as having an alcohol problem, the military will work with them. They will send them to a rehab, they will work with them, they will.... They may end up getting out of the military, eventually, but they will work with them. Drugs are a different issue, and it has to do with the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and using drugs being a felony. So you're right, in the civilian world, if somebody came to you and he had a drug problem, you could work with them. They could stay gainfully employed. But in the Air Force, if it's discovered they have a drug problem, then they are going to be civilians. It's the law. Okay? What surprises you?

Chaplain C: I don't think you let me answer this question.

Bob : Oh, didn't I? Ok, you go ahead and answer the question. Go ahead. How was it different for you? That would be interesting.

Chaplain C: Totally different.

Bob: How so?

Chaplain C: Totally different. Well my world is totally different, first of all. I mean the role of the rabbi is different, and my role especially is different. Because I was mostly dealing with younger kids. Older teenagers, young twenties, people who were out of college. And looking for spiritual growth. Looking for what we call "outreach". We call it *karib* in Hebrew. And so first of all, I was starting out in a situation where, to be honest with you, most people looked up to me. Because I'm an intelligent person, and that kind of thing takes you far in Judaism. And I knew what I was talking about, and I usually knew what I was talking about. [chuckle] I pretended I knew what I was talking about.

Chaplain A: You faked it very well.

Chaplain C: And my goal, and what I did when I talked to people, I would basically try to encourage them, try to help them grow. If they were having certain struggles, I would try to help them get through it. Give them advice and encouraging them. Maybe advising them sometimes, and helping them become better people. That was my main role. And that's the role of the rabbi. Rabbi means teacher. The rabbi's job is to help the people grow internally as people. To become better people than before. Become closer to God, closer to other people, more responsible. That's what a rabbi's supposed to do. And the rabbi's always looked up to, so to say. As somebody who has more answers than me. Has more ethical answers. Has more religious answers. And if he doesn't have it, he will find it out, so to say. Even when there's like personal issues, maybe somebody's daughter gets pregnant. So the family would come to the rabbi for advice as to how they would deal with it, as far as community impact. And if the rabbi wasn't comfortable with it, he'd go to his rabbi and ask for advice. So they say a kind of flow down. And if the rabbi was comfortable answering to it, he would get an answer from somebody else. In my case, specifically, since I am a young person, since I was helping younger people. Whereas in the military, as far as helping people grow spiritually.... Gee, I don't know.

Bob: [Laughs] I don't see that a whole lot.

Chaplain C: Most people, you have to have a desire to grow, I guess. It's pretty hard to get people the desire if they don't have that. And it's more about...the way I view it, not what have you, it's more about not making growth spiritually, but keeping them spiritually sane. Making sure they don't fall, I guess. Or if they are falling, as they usually are, but they have the resources necessary to pull themselves back up. It's more of an after-the-fact kind of situation, where people are stuck in these crazy systems, situations or whatever it may be. And you say, okay, well you've really got yourself into a pickle. You know, I got a guy, one person, who comes in to me, and, well, he has been on and off with this girl. Finally he got her pregnant. So he decided to get married. Heh. They had a beautiful baby. Then three months later he discovered from one of her friends, that you know, about the week he had been with her, someone else had been too. And she wasn't even sure he was the father. Whoa....

Bob: But that kind of thing, my experience has been, maybe because I've done a lot of counseling with Army persons, is not at all uncommon. Not in the least bit. Another thing coming from a Jewish perspective, or a Muslim perspective, or a Christian perspective.... We may have the occasional high school girl who gets pregnant. But we don't often have the case where we don't know who the father is, or you know, "I was drunk that night and don't remember how many people I was with." But those things we usually see quite a lot.

Chaplain C: It's definitely not the norm, and it's definitely not...when it does happen, it's not open. In the North American culture, getting drunk is something people talk about and be proud of. And in the Jewish culture, and I'm sure, definitely in the Arab-Muslim culture. We'd never say, "I got plastered last night, and I met a great girl at the bar, and now she was twenty-two and I was only eighteen. And now she bought me a drink, and I had to drink because I didn't want her to think I was a dweeb." I am like, "Your parents must really hate you," you know. "They really didn't bring you up well, did they?" [Much chatter and chuckles at once] So it is very, very different. People are not interested in growing spiritually. They are just looking for somebody.... Or what they need is somebody who will help them out when they are in trouble. But if they're not in trouble, well, I'll be friends with you, but actually quoting the law is very hard. They are not looking for it. You have to push yourselves on them if you want to do that.

Bob: I can see that. Chaplain C and I had a very good conversation the other day at Colonel Bruns' going away. We talked almost the whole lunch period about the role of counseling in Judaism. The word we used just a moment ago was advice, which in my counseling training, advice was almost a profanity. You were not to give advice. They're not coming to you for answers; they are not coming to you for advice. But it sounds like in your culture, in your tradition, someone comes to the rabbi....

Chaplain C: They are coming to you for advice.

Bob: So there is a different understanding of counseling.

Chaplain C: Yes, that's what the people want. People want the *Rashem*. People want the Word of God. What is the right thing to do in this situation? And, what do think will actually make the most sense in this situation, so to say? They want the common-sense answer. They want something that makes sense. They are not necessarily looking for how.... "I guess it's okay that I do this."

Bob: I would say people come to the chaplain for that sometimes too. I had a counselee yesterday that who came to see me, and the presenting problem was he'd been married just a short while, and he doesn't feel that he loves his wife. He loves somebody else, but they broke up. He rebounded and married this girl. And now nine months later, he's saying, "Gosh, I should have married girl A instead of girl B." And in essence he came to me saying "What should I do?" But I know as a trained counselor that my job is not to tell him, "Well, this is what you do--do A, B, C," and on it goes...but rather help him to come to grips with this understanding. And what is the spiritual answer to this? Well this

is a person of faith, so it's a little bit different. You stood before the altar and have committed yourself to this person forever. Now nine months later you're saying, "You ought to rethink that." Well, wait a second here.

Chaplain A: So we've got, let's say, clarification of spiritual guidance in counseling and then the emotional/behavioral type counseling.

Bob: I think that's an important point. One of the things I'm learning in writing this dissertation is that chaplains and pastors do different counseling than you would get in "Life Skills" or "Mental Health." And that I see is becoming a divide in the Air Force. Most of you, maybe not you, Chaplain B, are probably too new to the Air Force to remember the "Family Maltreatment Case Management Teams." Oh, man, that was a group that would get together about once a month. There would be a lawyer, a pediatrician, there were several social workers, there was a chaplain. And they would bring all the real... somebody who got in trouble on base because of a family issue.... They slugged their wife, their kid got in a fight with a teacher, something was going on with them, and they would bring all these things in. Now the people wouldn't come in, but their first sergeant would come in. And the commander would come in. And we'd have a write up that this is the situation that happened. "Airman Snuffy threw his shoe at his wife, the police were called, Airman Snuffy got arrested." And you would go around the table and talk about "What do we do, not to punish this guy, but what are the needs here, and how do we help?" Now all that to say, the chaplain used to have a place at that table. Since coming here I've discovered that we no longer have a place at that table. And that's because the model has switched. And it's become more of a DSM diagnosis kind of thing. And the feeling is, "Chaplains don't do that." So they don't really have a place at the table. Which in many ways to me is disappointing. Ah, because I think it removes us one step further away from where the real action is on base. So, I guess this is a roundabout answer to your question. But I think there's a different kind of counseling, that pastoral counselors do than the mental health professionals do. I know there's a different kind. Because if someone comes to me with a marriage problem, I'm not going to try to diagnosis them. I'm not going to pull down my DSM and say, "Well, you obviously have a passive-aggressive personality, and it goes back to your great grandmother." I can do that, but I think it's more profitable to look at them and say, "What do you want out of this? Where are you going?" and "What are you learning from this?"

Chaplain B: I think in part a saving grace of this is the complete confidentiality aspect.

Bob: I think so.

Chaplain B: And I think, I mean, even though that board was nice. And to be a part of that, is nice, and observe, and so forth, at Kirkland Air Force Base. I really, I heard what some of the active duty chaplains are saying. And they just feel that being a part of this, is, you know, a fine line on the confidential side.

Bob: Especially if it's somebody that you're seeing.

Chaplain B: Exactly. And you sit there, and you know you have the first sergeant there, that has called you on a number of occasions about this individual. And so the compromise in the atmosphere is there, tentatively, but it was there. But I think that complete confidentiality is actually a good thing. I think that's our ace. I mean, yeah, we are different; we are pastors and imams and rabbis and the like. We are the religious, quote unquote, excuse the word here, the icons in the military.... However, it's that confidentiality that definitely, whether we say it or not, does something for you. And it makes us a viable part of the team.

Bob: You're right. I think you're exactly right. On the family maltreatment thing, with my late wife, and later with Diane, every time I went to one, I would call my wife and say "I am so thankful for you." Because I just spent four hours listening to these stories and the things people get into. You just think, "My, am I glad for my wife." And then you go home and take a shower. Because I just felt like...ewww.

Chaplain B: And they do. The Air Force moved in because a lot of these cases, and you can attest to this...that wasn't the first time that "so and so" came to that board. This is the sixth time this individual has been reported for such and such behavior, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So they knew they were failing somewhere, and I think in a lot of respects the chaplaincy core has picked up the fumbles.

Chaplain C: That is a really good point, Chaplain Wido. That is the thing that makes the chaplaincy go bang in the Air Force is confidentiality. Not only do people come to us because they can have confidentiality, they look at us in a way like a safe-haven counselor. That's how they look at us. Whereas in the civilian world, you may come to people because they just want to hear what we have to say, not because they are afraid, or they have nowhere else to go, so to say. Here, most of the military context comes to us.

Bob: The confidentiality is absolutely vital. You're right. I hadn't thought about that. But you're right. If we did not have that, people would suffer. People would suffer.

Chaplain C: That's what's really unique about, obviously not the fear factor, being unique, but the military.

Bob: This is an aside, but the case going on with the Academy, with the cadet who is charged with raping another cadet. The whole issue, boiled down, to she went and saw a marriage therapist downtown, the military came and demanded to see her records. She said no, and they've gone back and forth on this. And I think it's a telling case of confidentiality. Someday that'll happen to a chaplain. But with this chaplain, the answers gonna be "No. Positively. Absolutely, no. No question." Well what surprises you about the kind of counseling that you are doing in the Air Force?

Chaplain B: The amount.

[Laughter, talking at once]

Bob: At least at BMT the counseling there is just.... You guys do four hours of counseling every morning, right?

Chaplain E: For me it's different with the 319th. I had them lined up. This is on Saturday.

Bob: Because the 319th is the group that's in flux or in transition right now.

Chaplain E: Correct.

Bob: So they are in need of lots of counseling, not just in the mornings, but all through the day. And sometimes all through the night.

Chaplain E: Sometimes. Not all the time.

Chaplain B: That's why he can never take leave. [giggle]

Bob: When you go to tech training you're really gonna miss that!

Chaplain E: Yeah, I sent you that e-mail that I sent to the BMT folks. It said, "I saved my prime for tech training, but I have no idea what I'm gonna be doing there."

Chaplain D: I can share. Come on, buddy.

Chaplain B: I just need for you to make a recording of the crickets. [laughter]

Chaplain A: Ch. Blancaflor has a cot in the back of the chapel back there.

Chaplain C: Whenever I do career counseling in the military, at least the way I've developed as a chaplain, is that whenever I.... First of all, the whole idea of being able to go and bother people while they're working is a totally new idea to me.

Bob: "Bothering people" is an interesting phraseology.

Chaplain C: When I was having an interview, with Chaplain K, and he, and I... chaplains would knock at the door and bother him. When I was talking to him it was like.... you mean people go and bother people while they're working? I don't need that. Whereas in the military you can do that. That's unique.

Bob: Well, we don't think of it as bothering people. [laughter] Though we'd like to think of it as ministry.

Chaplain A: Ministry! That's what we call it!

Chaplain C: But the role of the chaplain is to kind of counsel people, as in just talking to them. When I'm talking to people in my squadron, I'm getting information from them,

I'm trying to move them in a different direction. Whereas to the outsider it would look like a totally normal conversation. But in reality I have, like, this agenda. These formulas are going off in my head: "Okay, this type of personality is like this, and...." It's very complicated.

Bob: Sure. That's very legitimate. I think good counseling takes place when you don't even know it's taking place.

Chaplain C: Yeah, I think it's from a dimension of where, "So what I hear you saying is this," to moving in to a conversational format and that—it should be that usual realm, but I don't think it happens that way very often.

Bob: It surprises me sometimes that.... I imagine there are lots of kids (I'll use that term "kid" for an airman basic), who call their mother on Sunday and say, "Yeah, I talked this problem over with a chaplain." And you're thinking, if you heard that, "I never knew we talked that problem over." But it might be something as innocuous as you stopped by his desk and hand him a cup of...a piece of chocolate. "Oh, I've been thinking about this, what do you think, Chaplain?" And you talked it over for five minutes. But for him it's a life-changing thing. For you it might be very much in the normal course of life.

Bob: What do you think? What surprises you? Chaplain D, you've been quiet over there.

Chaplain D: The biggest surprise is what people (in the counseling setting) is what people are willing to share. And it goes back to the authenticity. They come to you, and it's...you're almost their final life-line because they are afraid of talking to their first sergeant because the first sergeant is too connected to the commander. And nobody talks to the commander. Nobody wants to...(at least in some of the squadrons I have), nobody wants to talk to Life Skills because there's the stigma that their clearance is going to get pulled, and they can't do their job, their guns going to get taken away. They are security forces.

Bob: And that's a very real, that's a real danger for them.

Chaplain D: Exactly. They are not going to go to Life Skills. They are not going to go to Family Advocacy. Because they sometimes saw their *first shirt* hanging out with one of the members of Family Advocacy. Well, if I talk to my first sergeant, you know, there the stigma is so.... The biggest surprise is what they are willing to share with the chaplain because of the confidentiality issue. "We know you're gonna lose your job if you open your mouth with this issue." That in itself is a big surprise for me because, in the marriage and family training, we were specifically trained in part [that] there are two times you break confidentiality--and that is suicidology or homicide. Those were the two issues. And coming into the chaplaincy they said, "No, there are no circumstances." I was like, "Whoa!"

Bob: The Air Force Chaplaincy, that's different from the other branches. The difference is, we had a Chief of Chaplains who was a priest a few times ago, and when the issue of

confidentiality came up, he said, "This is like being in confession. And if something is said to a chaplain, then that's the end of the discussion." Now the Army is not that way. They would be more along the lines of the medical model that says if it's suicidology, or homicidology, or sexual abuse of a child (is usually the third one). Then you have to break confidentiality.

Chaplain C: I would just say that the end result, in a way, the counseling cases would be similar to the civilian world. Because in a way, it's a self-generating problem in the military. Because, oaky, well, somebody's abusing their wife. So in the regular military culture, that means that it has to be reported, and the whole world has to fall down in the next ten minutes. That's what UCMJ says, and therefore you have to come to the chaplain. Whereas in the civilian world, when somebody's having...when somebody also comes to you for a wife abuse problem, and confidentiality issue wouldn't be an issue anyway. Because you just try to help them out, even if, I mean there's not, I mean there is a law....

Bob: Only for sexual abuse of a child.

Chaplain A: My, my.... This thing of confidentiality. As far as, as far as the child abuse thing is.... My denomination says that if there's child abuse, you've got to....

Bob: That's a moral dilemma. It's a huge moral dilemma.

Chaplain A: No. But now it's also in the context of the annual conference. I'm not in that annual conference here. If I were stationed in Virginia, I don't know. What the other side of that is, confidentiality is.... I think this has been discussed at Chaplain Basic Course. Whereas if that person gives you the permission, I think somebody in the class said, "Now, is that right?" Because under no circumstances, that's not quite right because if you are in council with that person, and you come to that person, and you say.... You basically talk to that person, and so, and convince that person, and say the best thing you can do is to go and talk to the legal authorities or whatever then, or they say they give you permission to do that, then that confidentiality has just been.... You can break that confidentiality because they've just given you permission to do that. But you probably need to get that in writing.

Bob: You do. Remember that confidentiality is the privilege of the penitent. So if somebody comes to me and says something, it's their privilege, not mine. They can give that privilege up. And DO get it in writing.

Chaplain A: Absolutely.

Bob: Because people in crisis are not the most reliable sources of reporting. I've had that happen. I've had somebody come and tell me that they were struggling with their sexual identity, and they were homosexual. And they wanted out of the military, and they wanted me to go to the commander and talk. And I said, "You're gonna have to give me a piece of dissertation in writing that waives your right to confidentiality." And he did it,

and we went to the commander, and now he's a civilian. We have the ability to do that. But we have to do it the smart way. We have to do it smart. Let me ask you this: What are the most difficult counseling cases that you've faced in the Air Force? What's the counseling case that when they come in the door, and give you their presenting problem, you just cringe and go, "Oh, no." What do you think? What are the ones?

Chaplain E: I think it's not a matter of one situation, I think, because the human mentality is that when someone comes to you, you want to give them a solution. You want to help them. You want to take care of them. You want to say, "Okay, you do one, two, three, and then you're going to be home free." Ah.... And this is my perspective when it comes to the chaplaincy. As a chaplain you want to look at it from the pastoral care counseling. This is the way you want to look at it, meaning that you want to walk the walk with them and take that journey. But are you there to give them solutions? You know.... "You do this..." And this is based on the situation. Some situation, you know, it's very simple. "Okay, you do this, and blah, blah, blah." But in talking about the heavy-duty stuff, you know, well, you know the situation. Such as when.... Okay, the rabbi talked about it when someone comes to you and says, "Hey, my daughter is pregnant." Or getting that on the duty chaplain call when I get that. And then this guy's daughter's pregnant, and then she ran away. And they have no idea where she is. And he wants to talk to you. Okay. And then he comes to you for a solution. "Chaplain, what do I do?"

Bob: Yup.

[Several talk at once.]

Chaplain E: He wants ME to give him the answer. What would I do? She's pregnant now, and she ran away. Okay, I have no idea where she's at, and these are the things I'm concerned about. Tell me what to do.

Bob: So you find that to be the most difficult kind of counseling?

Chaplain E: That's one of them. But it's like, okay. Do I give him solutions, or do I...? My perspective to this one is: "Let's talk about it. Can you tell me how things are going? Blah, blah, blah... feeling..." But, ah, when you have someone if you were outside with the Jewish community or the Islamic community, you look at it strictly from that perspective. But here, it's a little bit different. And how you balance the two. How you take care of it from the religious/spiritual side and the secular side now. Okay. Do I give solutions, or do I just only...? If I need to make recommendations and referrals, this is what I'd do. Definitely OSI get involved, blah, blah, blah, or these people they get really involved because she's under age, they live on base, blah, blah, blah.... So ah....

Bob: They found her?

Chaplain E: Yes, they did. She was with that guy. So, ah....

[Talking all at once]

Bob: They were going to have a murder case on their hands, with the father....

Chaplain E: But ah.... Yeah! That's what they were afraid about! These are the things that we had to bring up, you know. "What are your concerns?" Because he was asking for solutions, and my concern was...I thought, "He must be thinking about nailing that guy, not merely taking him to court."

Chaplain A: Killing that guy?

Chaplain E: Yeah.

Bob: You have military people who are trained to use deadly force, and when family situations come up like this, their recourse can sometimes be deadly force. And probably very capable of doing it.

Chaplain E: Ah...I think this is one of those tough situations around here. Somewhere deep down inside you want to make recommendations. ("Tell me what to do.") But on the other side, is that my job?

Bob: What is one of your toughest cases?

Chaplain A: I'll tell you what's really tough for me, since the time I've been with the military, is from the standpoint of "how can I help this person?" It is the truth...who has gone before the commander...been in trouble. Really wanting to try to get himself or herself straightened. But it's too late. It's come down the line. And you know, I had this situation, not too long ago, and was trying to get in there to talk with the commander, before the commander made the decision, and I'd set up an appointment. But the commander had to break that appointment. And was willing to do it again, but then, I was going to be gone. Something to that affect, that I couldn't meet with him that day. By the time I got back, he had already made the decision. And here I was. I had told this troop, "I'm not promising you anything, but I'll go to bat for you. And the 'shirt' is doing the same thing, and the supervisor." And here the commander finally came. I went in and talked to him anyway. There wasn't anything I could do or say to change his mind. So the next thing, here comes this troop back, to talk with me. "Is there anything else you can do?" You know.

Bob: Grief counseling at that point, probably.

Chaplain A: It really is. And this particular guy was from Western Virginia, and I've got a lot of connections back in Virginia to get him back there. And I told him, I can't do anything, you know, but I can help you on the other side. I can, fortunate for him, if he had come back to see me. Man, I could've called some of my colleagues back in Virginia, and said, "Hey, there's a guy coming back into your area." And I know the churches there. "Some churches have resources that might can help you." If he chose to

have it. But now if it had been someone from California or New York; where is that person going?

Bob: So that situation where a guy is up against the wall, and the commander's gonna make a decision about their future, and you're right. That is kind of what you were talking about, Rabbi. They'll come to see us, almost at the last resort. You know? "The commander's gonna decide this afternoon whether I get to stay in the military or not. Can you help me?" kind of thing.

Chaplain A: You see from my perspective, you know, that view, when I was out there in the civilian world, I was always getting the impression that that was, you know...let's say once they were out of the system or in the system. For instance, let's say somebody went to jail, and the rest of society was ready to forget about him. Whether they'd forget about him or her, or not, I was that person's connection. I was.... If it was in the middle of my church especially. And I felt an obligation to know what's going on with that person on the inside. And the transition here is, chaplains, once they are out of the military, it's not the chaplain's problem anymore.

Bob: No, no you're right.

Chaplain A: But from my.... You know, the way I've done ministry for the last twelve years, I have had certain ways of doing it. What's it gonna be. How's he? Not that I could make him do it, but it'd be easier if I were there in Virginia. I can't make him do those things, but I....

Bob: Civilianizing that situation, Chaplain A, imagine that you have a parishioner who worked at IBM and got in trouble. And their supervisor was deciding whether they stayed employed or not. You would not really have the place to set up an appointment with the IBM supervisor.

Chaplain A: Oh, no, no, no.

Bob: You couldn't sit down and....

Chaplain A: Right, I couldn't do that.

Bob: Because you're part of the system, you're part of the Air Force, the commander expects that you will come. And whisper in his ear, "Here's something you're not knowing." That's part of what we advocate at times. So what about the rest of you? What's the hardest cases for you?

Chaplain D: I think for me, the... whenever there's domestic violence involved, I had.... There were not many, but there were one or two instances where that was the issue. That was difficult for me. Especially when it's a man abusing his wife. And he's active duty, and she's at home. And there's a part of me that says, "Your wife has sacrificed so much. And she's always at home. What is she...? What more does she need to do for you not to

do that to her?" There's a part of me, I guess because of what I've seen in the past, having two daughters, that fatherly role comes out. I just wanna take the uniform off and show this guy what real power is. And I'm being real....

[Several talk at once.]

Bob: Probably not the best way to go....

Chaplain D: No, it's not.

Chaplain B: "Let me introduce you to...."

Chaplain D: Exactly!

[More chatter]

Chaplain D: That is the most difficult because that is the point where it's like, okay.... It's hard for me to be a chaplain. It's hard for me to be partial, and deal with the presenting problem when....

Bob: You mean impartial?

Chaplain D: It's hard for me to be impartial. Because I can't believe, I guess there's a part in my heart that just has that much compassion for women that have been physically abused. Because I've seen that...in the parish setting. I've seen women who were physically abused, and you see the guy, and it's like...you know, I could take him.

Chaplain B: Just check the license, please.

[Laughter and chatter]

Chaplain D: But then you have to.... You just...you just take the license plate off the car. Have the uniform. Take the.... Because to me that has to be the most despicable....

Chaplain B: Most of the counseling situations right here....

[More chatter all at once]

Chaplain D: If this is an atmosphere where we can be real, that's...that's...that's the hardest one for me.

Bob: I can understand that. Yeah, sure.

Chaplain D: Because that's the point where it's like, okay. There are no more boundaries at this point. And in those situations I find myself kind of swimming. You know, trying

to be professional. Trying not to take sides because that's the last thing you want to do in a counseling situation is take sides. And that's difficult.

Bob: It must be difficult for you, when the side that you'd like to take, and the person who's not there.

Chaplain D: Exactly.

Bob: Because usually my experience has been that the people will come in, and they picture themselves as being these saintly wonderful people who are patient and kind. You can tell when you're replaying a conversation. Well, I was saying this [gentle singsong voice], and then they got real angry [gruffly said]. And I was trying to be calm [gentle voice again]. And you know...you *know* that there are two sides to that story.

Chaplain D: I'm also looking for the perspective when the commander calls me and says, "I need you in my office NOW." And you actually see the woman with the black eye. And at that very moment, it's like, this is not a time to say, "What happened?" You know what happened. You can actually see it. And that's where, sometimes for me, that rational person doesn't want to come out. It's like, "Okay. Where's the guy? Let's straighten this out because nobody deserves that."

Bob: There's that righteous indignation.

Chaplain D: Exactly. Nobody deserves that.

Bob: So did you and the commander and the *first shirt* go and...?

Chaplain D: There was a situation where....

Bob: Lay hands on this guy?

Chaplain D: No, no.

[Laughter and chatter]

Chaplain A: They prayed for him.

Chaplain D: No. I mean, there is the other perspective, to further answer the question, where it's difficult about what we face is.... I often think about in my mind, "Who else is involved in this situation? And what decision do I advise.... How does that affect the system." That's the hardest part of the whole counseling care. Whatever I advise, or whatever decision is made as a result of talking to the chaplain. No matter what we say or do...when the troop talks to a chaplain, whatever that troop does, oh, the chaplain must have told you to say that. There is that perspective. I've actually encountered that. That's not being true. But it said, "Okay, how does this affect the system? And how does this reflect the team that I'm a part of?" Because, and I am no longer, you know, pastor

representing my church. I am a chaplain representing the wing chaplain and the United States Air Force.

Chaplain B: And twenty others.

Chaplain D: And twenty other chaplains. It's one of the perspective that if I screw this one up, how does that affect your ministry, and your image? And that to me is hard. Maybe that's a burden that I shouldn't put on myself, but it's one that I do.

Bob: Well, we appreciate the fact that you do. And I'll tell you why. Because the day that you break a confidence, you give everybody in this room a black eye.

Chaplain D: Whoa.

Bob: That's right. And people are not going to come to us, because they say, "You tell the chaplain something, and it's all over the place." What about you, Chaplain B, what do you think is the hardest?

Chaplain B: Well, I think it's the previous question and this question together. The both of which you go from one hour counseling where you're dealing with somebody that's suicidal, then you deal with somebody that was in a fatal car accident, then the following hour you're dealing with somebody who wants to dedicate a baby, and then the following hour you're doing premarital counseling. And then the last hour of the day you're doing the final prep for a wedding. And then somewhere along the line you get called for a memorial, and then an invocation for a retirement or a promotion. And that diversity is just.... So the timing, I think, when somebody walks through the door.

Chaplain A: That was my day yesterday. Oh, it was just like that!

Bob: You're emotions are just all over the place.

Chaplain B: So whatever comes through the door, you got your football gear on. You're ready to tackle whatever comes through the door, 'cuz you have to give it your best shot. I mean sometimes it's your one and only shot. I think, and that, along with that is the one that makes me cringe the most, I think., is when men and women come in, and they're having issues with identity. And they are absolutely alone. And it is so devastating. Because there's nothing you can say or do. And you put your religious theology on the shelf. Because if I speak to them as an Assemblies of God pastor, you know, "Your life is messed up, that's why you do what you do, you're living in sin, you're going to hell...." I mean the list is long, but I have an active duty military member here that had nowhere to go, except in through that door, and I happen to be the chaplain that was in the chapel at that time. And they walk in and sit there, and they literally emotionally bleed, all over your office. And all you have is a Band-Aid. And you are trying so hard to find the wound that's bleeding the most, to mend his heart, for the next day or for the next minute. And that's to me, I think, when I see that coming through the door, because of who I am, and because I'm going to love unconditionally whoever walks through that door. I know

by the time they leave I'm going to be spent. And that's.... I like the ones that come in, you know, who say, "Hey, my supervisor did this," or, "The military is saying this," and "I got this command, but I don't want to do this," and "I hate the world," or "I'm thinking about suicide." Believe it or not, I can handle that. Those are academic.

Bob: Remember that, guys!

Chaplain B: I know these things, you know. I can do this stuff with them, you know. I can do the dance. Then that person who comes in and emotionally bleeds all over my office, I mean, by the time they leave, I gotta walk in Chaplain D's office. Or I gotta go get some advice from someone from the rabbi, and I have. Because, and the C.A...she's been there a few times for me.... "I just need to sit in your presence for awhile because that was tough."

Bob: Sure.

Chaplain B: And when I see those come to the door, that's when I say, "Please don't let that happen...." I know when I have a hard time. Because I know me, and I'm gonna bleed right there with them. And they are sometimes the most rewarding too.

Bob: I would think, yes.

Chaplain B: When they're uplifted a moment or uplifted when they leave. You look in the mirror and you're like, "Besides the fact that...dang, you look good in this uniform [chuckles]," you're like, you know, "Thank you, God, for granting me the opportunity to be here." I think that's it.

Chaplain C: I would say something similar, Chaplain Wido, in that, the counseling that's the hardest, is the one where you can't help the person.

Bob: That's kind of what you saw earlier [pointing to Chaplain A].

Chaplain C: Exactly. That could be because they are emotionally.... There's just no hope for them, whatever it may be. You know, everything is "whoosh." And you know you can empathize them, and you can talk and try to do that as much as you can. And, but...they're not getting.... They don't even like the fact that you're pleasant. And it's, "Yes, yes, yes." And maybe it's good stuff talking to them, to talk to somebody. But they're not really into it that much. So a lot of times, the situation, I don't like it at all. But also, especially when dealing with BMT, there are a lot of people there to help us. And that's a different type of case where you can't help a person. You can help them emotionally sometimes. But also over there they are very hopeless. But also there's an aspect of injustice that seems to be going on. You know, it's like, what went wrong here? Why is this guy stuck in the system? He's sort of just sticking his thumb out and not letting go. And, who do you go to for things like that? You can't even help him out. He's like "Well, you know, chaplain, I have been here for seven months, and I am going to be here for another ten months, walking up and down the stairs, fixing time, my stress

factors. And there's nothing you can do about it because regulation says I have to do my two years." And well, you know, the guy, with our perspective, can get this person that will help him out. Like in terms of Viktor Frankl, Global Therapy. So you know, what type of perspective is he getting over here, what kind of creativity? What is he accomplishing in a year? What experiences has he learned that have some meaning for him? And it's all, "Nothing, nothing, nothing." He's suffering. This is hell. Now, if to be honest with you, if I were in a religious setting though, I could help. I could ask to give him a few answers to give him something to grab on to, to be honest with you.

Bob: What keeps you from doing that with somebody who just comes in the door?

Chaplain C: Because they don't believe anything, so I don't feel they would take any comfort from that. But Judaism has a lot of meaning in pain. What suffering is, and why it's in the world, and what meaning.... It has meaning, in Judaism. Suffering has meaning in Judaism. But if it was a Jewish person, religious, we would be dealing with the same conundrum, and I'd try and help them out. But these situations where they have very little spiritual rope to hold on to, and they are looking at a physical world, and they don't have anything to hold on to either. And so it's like, like you said, the Bible....

Chaplain A: I have something that I.... People come in to my office. This happened yesterday. In the course of the conversation, you know, I'll get the information, trying to get it down. And as I began to talk, a lot of times, you know, especially when it begins to lead into a spiritual nature, or something that had to do with discipline, living, you know, faithfulness in some sense. I will ask them, "What's your background? Do you mind me talking about.... You know, I'm a chaplain. I'm not just a counselor. My background is my faith profession. Do you mind me talking about that?" And if they say yes, that gives me the green light to say, you know, and I'll put it in, you know, terms that's not too harsh. But, you know, and I'll use myself as an example. Or something like that and give them.... I mean, unless he was a good actor, I think he, several people do that, that they respond to that, and it might just be that they've been looking for that, even though they don't even know it. They're looking for something to ground their lives in and that nobody's ever exposed to them before. As a chaplain, in that office, I think we have opportunities to do that. Now I don't get into, if they say, "No, I don't want to hear it," go ahead and do it anyway. No, I don't think I should do that. And I don't think we should hammer, I mean, even if this guy said, "My faith background is Christian." If you do this, or whatever the case may be, you know, find something that will help you. Those are the values you're looking for. Find the things that will help you get to that there.

Chaplain B: Being aware of the, "Sure, why not?"

Chaplain A: I've never had a "Sure, why not?"

Chaplain B: Because that's a quick way of saying, "Go ahead, Chaplain, sure." You know, and sometimes.... And I'll tell you this, that I could share this with you, as I understand. Sometimes when they walk into your office, and you give them the chaplain answer, they just fill in a square. And you just press on, and they are gonna go downhill,

and dive to whatever. And sometimes if we look back at certain conversations, did we, were we the pastor? Were we the chaplain? But were we the holder of the lifeline? And sometimes, it's great that they are coming to the chaplain's office. But it's not always because.... And they know the Bible, and they know of God. But you're the fifth person that told them that "God will see them through" and "this too shall pass". And they'll go out, and, I mean, it's not to take away from what you just said, but I'm gonna say....

Chaplain A: Sure, sure....

Chaplain B: The sure, why not. And you know, sometimes they do come to a chaplain because they are filling in that square.

Bob: If that's the case, is there anything that can be said to them that can be helpful?

Chaplain B: No. I mean, you know, then again, for those who ask the question, how many can do it? Some...I don't know....

Chaplain A: But you never know what you could say that could make a difference. Even though they would have come in there thinking....

Chaplain B: And I tell you, and I said this before, I said, and I shared this at ASSIST, from saying, you know, "Who do you need to talk to? I know you have talked to the imam? Do you want to talk to a rabbi, would that help? You want to talk to a male chaplain?" Or "You're from Wisconsin. Do you like Green Bay?" And that, I tell you, turns somebody completely around. No longer are they thinking about their suicidal thoughts. And Green Bay helps in some instances. It has nothing to do with God. Absolutely. Some people will think it different. [laughs] But anyways. But I mean, that's the thing, you know? I think as a chaplain in the Air Force.... I mean we sit here with this...we look at our chest, and you see the cross and our symbol of our belief...but sometimes we need to realize that this is what they're looking at, the person. I mean, and that they just might want to see that person. And then ask me about the cross later, or whatever you have there.

Bob: You know, one of the things that I've done when I do counseling, is.... My standard operating procedure is, if somebody's waiting for me...is, I'll come out, introduce myself, ask them what their first name is, ask if they want a cup of coffee. Well, they don't, but I do. So I grab myself a cup of coffee and talk to them, ask them where they are from...you know, how's their team there, and I've been in their state once before, and so on and so forth. By the time they get to my office, I already know a bit of information about them. But more than that, I've put them at ease. You know, I'm not going to first thing say, "Well what church are you with? You're not with my organization." You don't want to do that. You want to make sure to try to put them at ease and ask them about themselves. And you're right, Chaplain B. Yeah, I think a lot of things people are looking for..."Well who is this guy? What do they have to offer?"

Chaplain C: But I'd like to say on the subject that my way of looking at it, I guess, is that 99 percent of the time I can only work with what they already have. I can't give them new belief. And especially the kind of person on my list. 80 percent of the time that's what's going on. So, what I will try to do is, I know that there are these prodigies out there. Sometimes there are people who really feel or have a good idea of what God does. And I'll draw it out of them, if it's there. But if it's not there, my personal opinion is, I don't feel like it's so effective. Because to try to talk about these things that they don't really feel in their heart, so to say....

Chaplain A: Yes, if it's not there, no, you don't....

Chaplain C: No, the reality is, make the right reading....

Chaplain A: They're looking for...they're looking for an answer to their problem and trying to help the best you can. Anyway....

Chaplain B: It's just like if someone comes in, and says, "I'm Jewish, you know, but, and that aside, I just want to talk to you, Chaplain." And I'm like, "Okay, cool." And then when all is said and done, would you mind to speak to a rabbi? "Okay." But our whole conversation, from that five minutes to twenty minutes, I had to admit, it'd be more of a sociological perspective, than theological by far.

Chaplain A: Sure.

Chaplain E: We will be surprised sometimes that even if someone belongs to that particular faith, or that denomination, um, and that's why, to go back to what you're saying, it's really important, how, that that chaplain, he or she present themselves because if, he might be from the Islamic faith, but then goes to you and feels, "Hey, I can talk to that person. And that imam, I don't want to talk to the imam. Forget it." I can feel the connection here. And it can be with anyone. So it's really important us, how to present ourselves. I mean that's the first picture that individual is going to see. Ah, and then to go and, or, er, walk with them, with that mentality, sometimes it has to be fixing, changing, or solutions, or this or that. I come from a culture, you know, I have to behave this way. And...I think that's going to be very dangerous when we walk in with that attitude. Just align yourself. We're going to do PRT. You walk in with the group and tell that person, "This is...." Well you don't have to verbalize it, but to tell yourself, I'm gonna walk with him or her and see where he or she is going to lead me. But during that time I'm gonna try to bring to them what I see out there. We're taking a high hill, we're taking a hike...we're riding on a bike. You just want to get yourself on the bike, and don't see anything, to me it's wasting time.

Chaplain A: Kind of to go back to what you said at the very beginning, a lot of counseling is listening. Just plain listening. Let them tell their story. 90 percent or 80 percent or something like that.

Bob: I want to sort of wind things up a bit here now by asking one last question. And that's this: What, if anything, do you wish you could have done differently before coming into this career field? If you knew then, what you know now.

Chaplain B: Better sleep. [laughter]

Bob: Better sleeping habits would probably help. What you know now? What do you think you would have done differently? Or would you have done nothing differently?

Chaplain A: I would have done this a lot, about ten years ago.

Bob: Come into the chaplaincy? Would you?

Chaplain A: Yeah, I would have been at ten years about two years ago.

Bob: You'd be at my stage now, twelve years in.

Chaplain A: Well, I'd have loved to be, "Well you come in, switch tracks, and you..." Well, I did it for lots of, I think, silly reasons. I wanted to serve my country at a very difficult time, and my children, I had to think about what could have been or could possibly be, and my kids having to live in that. And I thought, well, put your money where your mouth is. And I had one last shot at coming in and doing something I've always thought about doing. And now that I'm in, I'm thinking, I wish I would have done this about nine or ten years ago. You know?

Bob: Running would have been a lot easier.

[Chuckles]

Chaplain A: Sit-ups would have been a lot easier, man. And all that good stuff. But that's definitely one thing I would have done.

Bob: What about you, Chaplain E?

Chaplain E: That's a tough question.

Bob: That's why we're asking this. A tough question.

Chaplain E: I'll skip for now and wait till last. Would that be okay?

Bob: Sure, absolutely.

Chaplain E: I need to think more about it.

Bob: Anything different?

Chaplain D: I think because I've grown to love the uniform so much, in such a short amount of time, I think I would have probably gone along the ROTC route in college. I would have prepared myself more for the military life, and military customs and courtesies. Prior to coming in I would have, ah, you know, not just relied on a person who has done it before and kind of agreed, "What do you do in this situation?" But literally would have gone for me, I'm even rewinding back to when I was graduating from high school. Maybe I would have been foolish enough to actually go to the enlisted side.

[Laughter]

Bob: Like other people here in the room....

Chaplain D: Because you know, if I'm not serious....

[Laughter and chatter]

Chaplain D: Because I see what they go through, and I know that, I don't think I could have gone through what the enlisted go through at my age, ten years ago. Obviously I didn't do that. But if I could do it over again, knowing that this would be the end result, in a heart beat, I'd do it.

Bob: Would you?

Chaplain D: Absolutely. That's what I would do differently. I would have gone the enlisted side. And then learned the ropes in that regard. And really prepared myself. Because I honestly believe, those in our situation, that have that experience, I'm not saying they are better or anything, but they have like a much more, they have a richer perspective. Because they can really...for example, when Chaplain Habash or Chaplain Rios, when there's a tech sergeant that walks into their office, they know what it's like to be a tech sergeant or a staff sergeant. They know what it's like to be an airman basic. And you kind of have that perspective where you can really resonate with them. And so, yes, for me that's a difficulty when I see someone walk into my office. It's difficult for me to resonate with them in their particular culture because I've never been there.

Bob: Good point.

Chaplain D: So that would be the one thing I would definitely do differently. I would have gone right out of high school, assuming that my attitude was different. But....

Bob: Sure.

Chaplain D: Of course a TI would have changed that!

[Laughter]

Bob: Big time. How about you, Chaplain B? Having been enlisted, what would you say? What would you do differently if you had to do it over again?

Chaplain B: Mmm. I would have perhaps, in addition, or in place of, because I graduated with a two Master's, I would have done counseling, a Master's in Counseling, I think that this, because of my...I would have been a little more sure footed. I think albeit, that I had practical experience in being enlisted and a chaplain candidate. Ah, I guess just the academic side, I would have liked to have, prior to coming in.

Bob: Sure.

Chaplain B: Academic. But, other than that, it's been one glorious ride. Although sometimes it's the death of me, that I'm prior. I'm sure you can share that too. It has been my saving grace and my end, that have opened doors into ministry, and into this sub-culture we call the Air Force, and I have enjoyed it. And I recommend the chaplain candidate program for everybody. If you're not prior, definitely pick the chaplain candidate program to be mandated.

Bob: Okay. Good. Good. Chaplain C, what do you think?

Chaplain C: Just to clarify, this question is, this question is, kind of, what would you have done to prepare yourself for the chaplaincy?

Bob: Right. If you'd known ten years ago that ultimately that you would end up as a chaplain.

Chaplain C: Well, I was only eighteen prior.

Bob: Just rub it in a little bit, Chaplain C, would you?

[Everyone talking at once. Laughter]

Chaplain C: I was still in high school back then...

Chaplain B: Let me get this on film!

Chaplain C: How would I prepare myself to be a chaplain? That's definitely a hard question. Well, to be honest with you, the only things that I can think of, are the things that I have learned being...on-the-job training...being a chaplain. You know it would have made my ministry in the beginning better, but, on the other hand, I was still doing other things in the last ten years. But all things I have learned, you know, these two years, it would have been helpful had I done the psychology, whatever, different types of counseling, personality traits. Ah, I've done a little research on conversation actually. Conversation dynamics.

Bob: It's a deep subject. Sure.

Chaplain C: And there are all interesting sciences. And it's interesting when you're a chaplain, and um, there are a lot of them. And I never studied those things formally.

Bob: You'd appreciate Narrative therapy. Narrative therapy has a lot to do with the way conversation takes place. Or stories.

Chaplain A: That's what my Bachelor's degree is: Communication Theory. And how people relate and talk to each other.

Bob: So back to you, Chaplain E.

Chaplain E: Again, like I said, it's a tough question. I take a different perspective on this one. Ah, ten years ago I don't think I would have been ready, ten years ago, and I would have never thought of it ten years ago, probably. I feel I came in at the right time, which, in this, you know, for the past maybe ten years, I've been thinking about how to become more competent and more effective in life as an individual, not in a community or group. But as an individual. So if I wanted to go back ten years ago, maybe that would have been my goal at that time before doing this. To be more effective, more competent at the individual level, before going out there, which is this level now, which is the community, or sub-community. So, ah, this is my distant shebang on this question I guess. I don't think ten years ago I would have.... A lot of people were just taking advantage of me.

Chaplain B: You were only a private back then. But we're prior!!! All right!

[Laughter, talking at once]

Chaplain D: That's exactly why I would have done prior, right there! What you just witnessed. Oh my goodness!

Chaplain C: You know, in a way, at least for me, I had to become myself, to a certain extent, before I could come into the chaplaincy. You know, I had to become a rabbi. I had to come back to, to that point. So, I would have not been as a chaplain either. And also there is a lot of things in the chaplaincy, you can't learn it outside, you know?

Bob: That's true. You're right.

Chaplain C: I mean, it's just...the communities to practice, the experience, you know, on-the-job training.

Bob: What do you do? I'm going to ask Di to take one picture of all of us together, just for the record. But any last shots. Any last comments before we wrap it up?

Chaplain B: Including questions on a woman's perspective.

Bob: From a woman's perspective?

Chaplain B: Well, in a sense, that directly, as a woman, how does this effect your ministry? I mean, in a way I have kind of addressed that indirectly, but....

Bob: How does that affect you, being female? Being the only female chaplain at Permanent Party, for example? How does that affect you?

Chaplain B: It's a plus and minus, because along with, you deal with the age thing, that folks had mentioned, the age plays into your credibility, as well as gender. Regardless of how much training you have, or how prepared you might be, are you prepared to face directly the gender obstacle? It's like people, they don't care; they don't want to hear it. Surprisingly, no matter what your academic accolades, whatever your pedigree is.

Bob: Oooh, that's hard to fathom in this day and age.

Chaplain B: It does happen. It does happen. And I can tell you, there are some women chaplains with some, I mean, an academic background that would just blow people out of the water. And when they walk into that counseling scenario, they are simply a woman. They have nothing that can help. There's no way you can help a man. There's no female problems. See things from his perspective, as far as from their religious background, they just see....

Bob: And it goes the other way around too. I think there are females who come in and are disappointed to have a male counselor. A male counselor couldn't possibly understand.

Chaplain B: Much more so that they see this career field as male dominated.

Bob: It is male dominated.

Chaplain B: So therefore it's more acceptable. So that's just something to kinda look into, somehow. Or just keep in the back of your mind.

Bob: Anyway, when all this is said and done, I should have this dissertation finished by the end of the year, I be glad to send anybody a copy of it.

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