

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAINCY:  
A HANDBOOK OF DISCERNMENT FOR EVANGELICALS CONSIDERING  
MINISTRY AS A PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAIN

A PROJECT THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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This Project is Dedicated to:

Mom, my first teacher and mentor, who taught me that it is okay to be utterly honest with God on your best day and on your worst day.

## **A CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER**

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of You?  
To act justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8*

O God, you have given us the gift of another beautiful day. We give You praise and thanksgiving!

There are times, dear God, when life can seem complicated and chaotic. There are times when it seems we can make simple things very complicated. Give us the wisdom to understand the truth in simplicity.

You invite us to be in personal relationship with You. What an amazing, life-giving gift! Today's scripture reminds us of what You require of us.

To simply love mercy and walk humbly with You. Throughout this day, may we seek to recognize the opportunities to demonstrate mercy to those we encounter through acts of compassion and kindness. May we humbly take time to listen to the concerns people may be experiencing today.

For in doing so we will be walking with You and celebrating the day that You have given us.

In Your holy name we pray.

Amen

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to create a resource that would provide practical insights leading toward discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* was written and evaluated by a team of twelve professionals who serve as pastors and chaplains.

A Likert survey with additional qualitative questions was administered to determine if the handbook successfully led to discernment and provided practical tools for entering the profession of professional chaplaincy. Responses indicated the handbook would be an effective tool for discernment for person's considering professional chaplaincy.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...”*

*Luke 10:2*

Professional chaplaincy is a unique form of ministry where the professional chaplain goes to where the people reside. While working as a hospital chaplain I received a patient request for a chaplain visit. Upon entry, I met a man lying on his side. He immediately sat up and seemed to welcome a chaplain visit. He began (I will call him Toby) by telling me that he “almost died.” I asked him what that meant, and he dove into telling me his life story. He told me that he had “lived on Mountain Dew and cigarettes” which led to him being rushed into the emergency department and spending a few days on a vent in the intensive care unit. I provided empathetic listening and learned that he had been married for many years and “it was just the two of us”. I also learned that he found much purpose being a hard worker, even to the point of returning to work for several years to deliver pizzas after he officially retired. I learned that he was nearly seventy and he and his wife had decided to both retire. This had occurred a few months ago which meant that he had gone from a very active man to a very sedentary man.

As the conversation continued, Toby informed me that he had not been to church for a long time. (I remember it kind of felt like a confession.) At the same time, he asked me if I would say a prayer for him and his wife. I agreed. I held his

hand, closed my eyes (which is my custom), and prayed. The Spirit felt very strong in the room. When I finished the prayer, I looked at Toby and he had tears streaming down his face. I asked him “What does that mean?” He replied, “It was like I was eight years old.” I probed what that meant, and he explained that his grandmother would take him and his brothers and sisters to church on Sunday mornings to “a little white church.”

I learned that being taken to church by his grandmother was the last time he attended church. Yet, the ember of faith had been with him all his life. Further, in the moment of our prayer together God had breathed on that ember. Observing the change on Toby’s face I believe Toby’s faith and relationship with Christ had been revived.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project was to create a handbook that would provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The research question was: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

### **Overview**

This handbook presented a way that God is reaching into our multicultural society through the ministry of professional chaplaincy. It provided a biblical, theological, and practical framework for the ministry of professional chaplaincy. The resource advocated for a role for the Evangelical Christian in professional chaplaincy. Finally, this handbook highlighted the need for Evangelical Christians

in professional chaplaincy as a best practice in serving all persons thus assisting the profession of chaplaincy to live more faithfully into its own stated vision.

The goal of this resource was to allow the reader to understand the ministry, challenges, obstacles, joys, and art of professional chaplaincy. In this way, the handbook as designed to serve as a tool of discernment and instruction for evangelical Christians who might be considering ministry as a professional chaplain.

### Foundation

My sixteen-plus years serving as a professional chaplain have shown me three things. First, God is working with evangelical Christians through the profession of chaplaincy to reach people, many times unchurched, within our multi-cultural reality. Second, there are obstacles to the profession of chaplaincy; specifically, the assumption of pluralism, the scope of ministry that now includes all people and the challenge of proselytization which is strictly forbidden. Third, the reality is that evangelical Christians are vastly under-represented in the profession.

My eighteen-plus years serving as a pastor in the local church has taught me that the ministry of professional chaplaincy is often not seen in the same regard as local church ministry. Therefore, there is a need to argue for the validity of ministry beyond the local church through professional chaplaincy as a form of evangelism. This requires a shift from a focus from proclamation of the Word to a focus on representative ministry. Taken together, these teachings

validate the church in ministry beyond the church walls and illustrate the value of representative ministry.

### Personal Background

I am blessed to have had a wide variety of experiences within various voices within the Christian family and within my ministry as a board-certified chaplain. I was raised in the Roman Catholic church, post-Vatican II. Faith became real to me between the age of six and eight years.

At the age of nineteen I became involved in the United Methodist church. I was drawn to the empowerment of the laity, the singing of our theology and especially the encouragement to read one's Bible. During this period the words of scripture became alive in a new way, and I was encouraged to put my faith into practice. At the age of twenty-seven I entered seminary and attended between 1993-1996. I began serving as a student pastor in April 1995 and was ordained an elder in the United Methodist church in 1999. Serving in the local church has been challenging and amazing. To date I have served as a pastor in the local church for eighteen-plus years. I continue to serve in the local church when time and physical energy allows. Currently, I am serving three small churches in the Zanesville, Ohio area.

In my personal life I have been blessed by family members, friends and co-workers who come from a Pentecostal foundation. I have learned from their endurance in faith and the evidence of God in their lives. My life experiences with faithful Christians from a vast array of Christian denominations and foundations have taught me that God is more than we can ever know, and we are more when

we come together, work together, and respect the differences and gifts each brings to the “Christian choir.”

In April 2007, I began my ministry as a chaplain. I completed my four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and became a Board-Certified Chaplain (BCC) in 2015. A constant during these past sixteen-plus years has been serving as an emergency department chaplain. This means I often serve families and staff in crisis situations. I have also had extensive experience in hospice/palliative care, and general hospital visits. During the pandemic, being the senior member on the staff, I was assigned a thirty-two-bed intensive care unit for COVID+ patients.

My Covid experience led to the writing and publication of a book titled, *A Chaplain’s Perspective on the 2020-2021 Pandemic: Tragedy, Resilience, Hope*. The book has added to my ministry as it has led to opportunities to share the book in various settings. People have told me that the book has helped them process their own pandemic experience and assisted them in making some sense of the experience. I believe moving forward writing will become a bigger focus that God is leading me in ministry.

My personal life experiences and my experiences in ministry convince me that God is active and alive. Serving as a professional chaplain has demonstrated to me that God is creating a way to reach people in a multi-cultural society. One of these avenues that God is creating is through the ministry of professional chaplaincy.

## Biblical Research

The biblical research examined two scriptural passages: I John 2:1-2 and I John 4:19-21. The first passage, I John 2:1-2, served as a lens into Johannine theology and the understanding of God's universal salvific will (Black 1998, 388; Brown 1982, 242; Rensberger 1997, 57-58; and Thomas 2004, 90). The second passage: I John 4:19-21 examined how God's universal salvific intent is put into practice by those who confess Jesus as Christ and are guided by the Holy Spirit to extend this love ethic to include all people (Alexander 1962, 108-114; Black 1998, 432; Brown 1982, 563-65; Loader 199, 57-58; McDermond 2011, 232; Sloyan 1995, 49; and Thomas 2004, 237).

The gospel of John begins with a creation account (John 1:5) thus reminding the reader of earlier creation accounts known within the community. John 1:9 then introduces God's universal salvific will in "light of the one who shines in the darkness" (John 1:5a). All biblical quotations unless otherwise specified are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

The theme of God's universal salvific will is then reinforced with John 1:9 "The true light which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world". James McPolin writes, "The Word was the light who, in coming into the world, enlightens 'every man' for, as perfect and authentic revealer, he provides light to every man and in some mysterious way his work touches even those who do not know him" (McPolin 1979, 7).

The biblical research analyzed three modern day interpretations and issues found in I John to then allow for the hearing of the Johannine voice within



the context of its original setting and meaning. After addressing these interpretations, the implications of I John were discussed. Specifically, the love ethic first within the community of believers (I John 1:10). Unity rooted in confession of Christ which is evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit (I John 4:2-3 and I John 4:15). Love in action understood in light of God's universal salvific will (I John 4:14) which extends to all (I John 4:21) then serves as the foundation for unity within diversity.

I learned three insights when researching and writing the biblical research of the final project. First, as I mentioned in my personal background, I was raised Roman Catholic. In seminary, I attended a class on Johannine Literature at the Josephinum Pontifical College in Columbus, Ohio. Also, James Mcpolin and Donald Senior are Roman Catholic thinkers. My encounter with Johannine literature led to my writing and publishing the book *A Message of Life and Love: Proclaiming Good News from a Johannine Perspective*. This book contained fifteen sermons based on the gospel of John and I John and was published in 2001.

In this way, it was important to explore if the idea of God's universal salvific intent and its implications on a love ethic to all were confined to a post-Vatican II thought. First, Neil Alexander and his book *The Epistles of John: Introduction and Commentary* written in 1962 confirmed the idea of Johannine authorship (Alexander 1962, 17-19) and the scope of the love ethic that moves to all people (Alexander 1962, 108-114) to pre-date Vatican II and was also voiced by a member of the Christian family that is not Roman Catholic.

Alexander summarizes his understanding of the love ethic understood within the Johannine community, writing:

Love for God without love of men is a morally impossibility. So, if we are to love God, brotherly love is no *option* (v. 20). Remember, too: brotherly love (as well as love to God) is God's explicit *command!* (v. 21). Yet another point. We who believe 'Jesus is the Christ' are children of God. We love the Father. Consistency demands that we love *his* as well as *him*; 'love the Father' has its necessary corollary 'love the child' - our brother-child of the same loved Father (Alexander 1962, 113).

Second, was the discovery that not all Christian thinkers and commentaries recognized God's universal salvific intent which is found throughout Johannine literature and therefore did not explicitly articulate that the love ethic from a Johannine perspective is meant to extend to all people. This was a new idea to me. Therefore, it was necessary to explore many voices and denominations within the Christian family to determine if this idea is limited to Roman Catholic thought. Neal Alexander, Clifton C. Black, William Loader, J. E. McDermond, David Rensberger and John Thomas all wrote commentaries articulating the love ethic that extends to all people in Johannine literature. All these thinkers represent voices within the Christian choir that are not Roman Catholic. David Rensberger is a United Methodist and John Thomas represented a Pentecostal point of view.

Third, a reading of Johannine literature that does not take into account God's universal salvific intent that leads to a love ethic to all is prone to a very serious distortion. If a person reads that the love ethic, promoted within the Johannine community, is limited to like-minded believers in Jesus then it could very easily develop into an us and them reality. Further, if left unchecked it is not

beyond the realm of possibility for the Christian believer to believe they were somehow “superior” to the non-believer who no longer belongs to the ethic of love. One wonders if a sense of colonialism could develop with this type of distortion of Johannine literature and thought.

Professional chaplaincy is a ministry to all people, not simply those who belong to one’s faith community. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a biblical foundation that informs ministry to all people. Admittedly, many biblical foundations can be found. For the purpose of this project, I chose exploring the biblical foundation found in Johannine literature.

### Theological Research

The theological research highlighted in this section included, first, the logic of mission that extends to all persons as a theme of God’s salvific intent. Second, it undertook a reflection on the Trinity and how a Trinitarian understanding of unity within diversity can dialogue with various perspectives on unity including homogeny, dualism, and pluralism.

Richard Bauckham examined the logic of mission in a postmodern world in the book *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Bauckham summarized his point writing, “Mission takes place between the highly particular history of Jesus and the universal goal of God’s coming kingdom (Bauckham 2003, 84).

Walter Brueggemann writes concerning the logic of mission and the need for “human community not defined by commodity”. Brueggemann analyzes that “despair is the defining mark of the context for the church mission in the twenty-

first century” and the Christian community as a “community of hope” must engage this reality (Brueggemann 2001, 155).

In the book *Hope of the World: Mission in a Global Context*, Brueggemann includes an essay written by theologian Janos D. Pasztor who writes concerning the centrality of Trinitarian theology, “It is Trinitarian theology that gives us the tools for critical examination of the ideas and practices of the church and its mission, past and present” (Brueggemann 2001, 146).

Robert Kress and the article titled, “Unity in Diversity: Toward an Ecumenical Perichoresic Kenotic Ontology” speaks into the tendencies for group homogeneity with insights from the Trinity. Kress relates the Church universal the “One Church of the One God whose oneness is not monastic but communal (Kress 1990).

Marianne Meye Thompson and the article titled, “The Gospel of John and Early Trinitarian Thought: The Unity of God in John, Irenaeus and Tertullian” provides insight into Irenaeus’ thought. Thompson writes concerning Irenaeus (132-202 AD) and his struggles with early Gnosticism which sought to demote the creator God to a secondary and inferior status. Thompson writes, “Irenaeus combats the Gnostics who wished to sever the God who created from the God who saves” (Thompson 2014, 155). In this way, Irenaeus understanding of the co-equality in the Trinity frees us from dualistic thinking

Kevin Giles emphasizes that,

diversity is of the nature of the church, not a sin to be overcome. Unity within diversity inherent in the divine Trinity of persons that in an analogous way should characterize the life of the church in its local,

regional, international, and universal dimension. This fellowship does not aim to overcome all diversity; but rather to embrace it in dynamic, relational, and growing bond of love and understanding. (Giles 1995, 202)

Within professional chaplaincy the ministry is to all people and the beginning of every spiritual care visit is rooted in the dignity of the other. Therefore, the professional chaplain will be in ministry in a variety of settings with people who understand the world and God differently. Developing an understanding of community and how community develops and enhances the whole is important for the professional chaplain to then be able to enter these various settings with integrity and authenticity grounded within their faith tradition and understanding of God.

Irwyn L. Ince Jr. examined the Trinity and its relationship to the human community. Ince writes,

For humanity to be the image of God, it must embody beautiful community-unity in diversity, diversity in unity. If God displays its beauty in the Trinitarian life, we should expect that beauty to be reflected in the humanity that images Him. While each person is royalty, we find the fullest expression of the image in the community. (Ince 2020, 55)

The professional chaplain is an integral part of the care team and as a professional within the institution their work is uniquely positioned to model dignity to all and compassion and understanding to various forms of community. A theological foundation that takes a Trinitarian perspective provides this to the care team and the institution in which they work.

#### Historical Research

The historical research covered a brief examination of representative ministry, which is the heart of professional chaplaincy. Leonardo Boff places

Jesus as the archetypal representation of representative ministry that is focused on peace and healing. Boff writes, “It was Jesus who taught us to insist even to the point of pestering (Luke 11:5-8). He will give us his peace, a peace achieved through service rather than through power” (Boff 2001, 17).

Throughout Christian history there have been times when it became necessary for the Christian witness to refocus the Christian vision towards the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the voiceless. St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) challenged the church and the Christian witness of his day in such a simple and powerful way that it continues to speak to many throughout the world today. Donald Soto recognizes the power of St Francis’s witness, “His life and example- and not let it be stressed, anything specific he said and wrote- had an integrity that challenges our presumptions about what constitutes a good life, not to say a respectable approach to religion” (Soto 2002, xvii).

We have the example of Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), the founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. As a young woman, McPherson served as a missionary in China. Led by the Spirit she began serving the needs within her own community in Los Angeles, eventually establishing the first Foursquare Church, Angelus Temple, in 1923. The movement has held a priority to mission, sending missionaries and service to the poor. McPherson modeled the need for evangelism to be both proclamation and representative ministry. Esther O. Cephas describes one of McPherson’s great contributions as “serving human needs while preaching salvation goes hand in hand” (Cephas 2022, 40).

More recently, is the example of Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, better known as Mother Teresa (1910-1997) who received permission from the Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church to start her own order, "The Missionaries of Charity" whose primary task was to love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after (nobelprize.org). in the book *Mother Teresa: In the Heart of the World: Thoughts, Stories, & Prayers* is a writing that summarized her understanding of representative ministry. Mother Teresa wrote concerning her belief and understanding of suffering, "the greatest suffering is being unloved, just having no one" (Teresa 1997, 14-15).

The professional chaplain, in the spirit of representative ministry, meets the greatest need of suffering. The professional chaplain is a physical, compassionate presence that reflects value, meaning, and dignity of the other through compassionate presence, active listening, physical touch, empathetic listening, and encouragement.

The historical foundation examined these historical figures and their contributions within their time and setting through representative ministry. Each of these individuals added to the growth of the Kingdom of God through acts of compassion and representative ministry. In this way, the historical foundation examined representative ministry as a necessary form of evangelism. From a historical perspective at various times God has used both representative ministry and proclamation of the Word. Therefore, representative ministry and the proclamation of the Word are partners within evangelism.

## Contemporary Literature

Contemporary literature examines challenges and opportunities that have developed in professional chaplaincy because of changes made in the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy*. These challenges and opportunities developed in 2004 when the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy* broadened the scope within which professional chaplains serve. In the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy*, the Association of Professional Chaplains mandated that “chaplains are to provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual and religious practices” (Cadge and Sigalow 2013, 147). This led to the perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig where it was believed that having a pluralistic worldview, meaning no tradition has the ‘corner on truth’ would be a requirement to be an effective professional chaplain (Fukuyama and Sevig 2004, 29).

The movement of scope in ministry to include all people has led to growth within the profession. The recent article titled *Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers: The Emergence and Growth of Chaplaincy Programs in Theological Education* discovered “substantial growth in chaplaincy-focused programs in theological schools in the last twenty years” (Cadge et al 2020). This change in scope in ministry has also created opportunities to minister with persons, especially young people, who might not trust organized religion and clergy in general who are willing to trust a chaplain. Therefore, moving into the future it



may be chaplains who will be the primary healers to individuals in the public sphere during times of crisis (Cadge et al. 2020).

Examining the growth in professional chaplaincy found enormous growth in the profession and those that are served by a professional chaplain. Areas of growth in professional chaplaincy included prison chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, veteran's affairs chaplaincy, disaster chaplaincy, transportation chaplaincy, college and campus chaplaincy, psychiatric care chaplaincy, workplace chaplaincy, police-firefighter chaplaincy, professional/college sports chaplaincy, hospice chaplaincy and healthcare/hospital chaplaincy.

A recent study conducted by Gallup for the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab at Brandeis University reported that "one in four Americans have interacted with a chaplain at some point in their lives" (Saad 2022). The article revealed that most people reported the interaction with the chaplain was valuable to them, as forty-four percent called it very valuable, and thirty-two percent reported moderately valuable. Another, seventeen percent said the encounter was only a little valuable, while seven percent described it as not valuable at all (Saad 2022).

An examination of contemporary literature discovered two shifts that are occurring in the world of professional chaplaincy. First, the perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig who discussed the need for a pluralistic worldview to be an effective professional chaplain is being challenged by a new perspective of authenticity in practice and personhood. The article *The Chaplain as an Authentic and Ethical Presence* (Zucker, Bradley and Tucker 2007), questioned if inauthenticity in practice by the professional chaplain may do harm

to both those being served and the chaplain. Instead, the writers advocated for authenticity by the professional chaplain and for the professional chaplain to make referrals to other professional chaplains or clergy who can best serve a patient's and families' needs.

Research for the project thesis found significant growth in the movement from pluralism to authenticity for the professional chaplain. It is the hope that this project thesis and the handbook *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* will add and contribute to the movement from pluralism to authenticity. This movement will allow the profession of professional chaplaincy to live into its own stated vision more fully. This movement from pluralism to authenticity will also provide a bridge for all persons and faith traditions that hold an absolute truth, including the evangelical Christian, to enter the profession of professional chaplaincy.

A second shift in the world of professional chaplaincy discovered in the contemporary literature is a shift from the working paradigm that quality spiritual care provided by the professional chaplain as a part of a healthcare team can affect "how" a person gets better to also include often "if" a person gets better. Contemporary literature focuses on evidence-based research. All contemporary literature was dated from 2000 to today. This evidence-based research is repeatedly demonstrating a correlation between care provided by a professional chaplain and improved patient outcomes. The evidence-based research is giving increased credibility to the services provided by the professional chaplain. This

evidence-based research is also spurring the growth of spiritual care departments and opportunities for professional chaplains.

### **Context**

Initially the project proposal planned to have participants who were professional chaplains and those who instruct people considering professional chaplaincy to review the material. The participants included both male and female. The participants served as professional chaplains in a variety of settings. The participants came from various Evangelical communities who find unity in their agreement that “Jesus Saves.” These participants made up an expert panel of ten to fifteen members to review the handbook. As I developed the Likert Scale survey and the qualitative questions it became evident that it would be important to also survey those people who serve in a local church setting.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Evangelism-** A process in which a Christian holds the absolute truth “Jesus Saves” and shares this truth with others. The World Council of Churches proclaims that the Lord Jesus is “God and Saviour according to the Scriptures” to be a foundation declaration (Green et al. 2018, 27).

**Archetypal-** A model figure.

**Pastoral Care-** Ministry that occurs to those within one’s community or parish.

There is a sense of familiarity in the relationship.

**Spiritual Care-** Ministry that occurs to all persons. Prior to the spiritual care visit there is no familiarity in the relationship. This is the starting point for the ministry of a board-certified chaplain who is called to serve all people.

**Proclamation Ministry-** Proclamation ministry is the preaching and teaching of biblical principles and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Representative Ministry-** Representative ministry is a ministry rooted in compassionate presence and journeying alongside one another. Legend recalls that St. Francis of Assisi said, “When all else fails, use words.”

**Board Certified Chaplain-** In the resource I focused on board certified chaplaincy through the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). Affiliation in an accredited association for professional chaplains is a requirement for most employment opportunities.

### **Project Goals**

The purpose of the project was to create a handbook that would provide insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The resource question was: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading toward discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

The project goals were:

1. The resource will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multicultural reality through the profession of chaplaincy.
2. The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC).
3. The resource will identify three challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community.

4. The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.
5. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity.
6. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.

### **Design, Procedure and Assessment**

The purpose of the project was to create a handbook that would provide practical insights leading toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The research question was: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy? A panel of twelve professionals including professional chaplains and those professionals serving in the local church evaluated the handbook for clarity, relevance, and application. The panel consisted of professional chaplains serving in a variety of settings who analyzed if the handbook gave a realistic picture of ministry as a professional chaplain, effectively identified challenges in both the world of professional chaplaincy and within the church for evangelicals considering ministry as a professional chaplain, provided practical insights for navigating these obstacles to then enter and serve successfully in ministry as a professional chaplain, and finally evaluated if the handbook would serve as a valuable tool for discernment.

Participation was voluntary and assessments were anonymous. Participants were given an assessment tool and eight weeks to evaluate the handbook, and then asked to complete a Likert scale survey with qualitative questions online. The Likert scale that was used to measure effectiveness scored responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6).

### **Personal Goals**

My personal goals were formed based upon my continuing work as an active professional chaplain in patient care. I believed this continued practice would inform my growth in leadership. My personal goals were as follows:

1. I will pray daily for personal wisdom to then be able to serve those patients, families, and staff I serve as a professional chaplain.
2. I will model unity within diversity by seeking dignity and understanding among individuals who think and/or believe differently.
3. I will go on a retreat and meditate on biblical passages on Christian leadership including Matthew 20:16, Matthew 25: 34-40 and John 10:27 to grow in healthy biblically based forms of leadership.

### **Plan of the Paper**

The purpose of the paper is to examine the growth of professional chaplaincy and the way God is using professional chaplaincy in a multi-cultural reality to reach the unchurched and those who are currently not having their needs met by traditional forms of church. The paper has six chapters. Chapter One is an introduction and overview of the final project. Chapter Two provides biblical, theological, and historical foundations for the project. Chapter Three is a review of the contemporary literature surrounding professional chaplaincy and two shifts that are occurring within the profession of chaplaincy. Chapter Four

describes the design, procedure, and assessment of the project thesis. The Likert scale survey results and corresponding qualitative questions are reported in Chapter Five. Chapter Six, the final chapter, summarizes the project and will provide the conclusions as they apply to the profession of professional ministry and those who may consider entering the profession of professional chaplaincy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Chapter two will explore the roots of professional chaplaincy from a biblical, theological and historical perspective. The chapter will demonstrate the validity of ministry to all people. It will then examine the theological foundation of the Trinity and the understanding of unity within diversity and diversity within unity to articulate and argue for authenticity as a means for ministry to all people. Finally, is a brief examination of historical figures who embodied representative ministry, the movement of going to where people live and reside, and the effectiveness of a healing, representative presence that is rooted in Jesus who is the great physician (Mk 2:17).

#### **Biblical Research**

The biblical research explores God's universal salvific intent as understood within the Johannine community in light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Admittedly, an evangelical Christian seeking ministry as a professional chaplain can find a biblical foundation in many biblical areas. My personal scriptural home is within the Johannine writings. Therefore, the biblical research will use a Johannine lens to explore God's universal salvific intent.

Board certified professional chaplaincy is a ministry to everyone. Therefore, it is necessary for the evangelical Christian seeking ministry as a



board-certified professional chaplain to have a biblical foundation that provides insight into a ministry to all people.

The biblical research analyzes the following two scripture passages:

I John 2:1-2 and I John 4:19-21. All scriptures used in this document are from the NRSV version. The first passage: I John 2:1-2 will serve as a lens into Johannine theology and the understanding of God's universal salvific will (Black 1998, 388; Brown 1982, 242; Rensberger 1997, 57-58; and Thomas 2004, 90). The second passage I John 4:19-21 will examine how God's universal salvific will is put into practice by those who confess Jesus as Christ and are guided by the Holy Spirit, who now extend this love ethic to include all people (Alexander 1962, 108-114; Black 1998, 432; Brown 1982, 563-65; Loader 1992, 57-58; McDermond 2011, 232; Sloyan 1995, 49; and Thomas 2004, 237).

The gospel of John begins with a creation account (John 1:1-5) thus reminding the reader of earlier creation accounts known within the community. John 1:9 then introduces God's universal salvific will in the "light of all people" and the "light of the one who shines in the darkness" (John 1:5a). This theme is then reinforced with John 1:9 "The true light which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world". James McPolin writes,

The Word was the light who in coming into the world, enlightens 'everyman' for, as perfect and authentic revealer, he provides light to every man and in some mysterious way his work touches even those who do not know him. (McPolin 1979, 7)

The Johannine understanding of God's universal will is a motif that is seen throughout the Johannine corpus (John 1:9; John 3:16-17; John 12:32; John 12:47; I John 2:1-2; I John 4:14). God's universal intent is God's ultimate

purpose. "Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). Donald Senior writes, "The return to God- not only the world but all humanity- is the final purpose of Jesus' mission in the world" (Senior 1991, 17).

To analyze a Johannine understanding of God's universal salvific will three modern day forms of interpretation and issues found in I John are discussed. Analyzing these interpretations and issues will allow for the hearing of the Johannine voice within the context of its original setting and meaning.

The three issues to be addressed include, first, the issue of authorship, second, the use of the words anti-Christ, Satan, and Devil, third, the Johannine understanding of sin. First, the issue of authorship. There is no consensus among biblical scholars concerning the authorship of the corpus of Johannine literature (Black 1998, 365-366; Yarbrough 3-7, 2008) however, a significant school of biblical scholars recognize the corpus of Johannine literature contained in the Bible includes the Gospel of John, I John, II John and III John (Alexander 1962, 17-19; Brown 1988, 105-108; Grayston 2000, 89; Kysar 1976, 136-144; and Williamson 2010 31-51). In a similar way, a significant school of biblical scholarship recognizes a different author and context for the book of Revelation (Collins 1984, 25-34; Grayston 2000, 76-77; and Kysar 1976, 144-146). This school of scholarship's long history began with Dionysius of Alexandria (d.c. 264) who expressed doubt that John of Patmos, the author of Revelation (Re. 1:9) had written either John's epistles or the Gospel of John (Black 1988, 366). Understanding authorship allows the Johannine corpus and the book of

Revelation to speak for themselves, thus, blessing the broader Christian family through the faithful hearing of each witness to God's faithfulness.

Second the use of the words anti-Christ, Satan, and Devil. Who or what do these words refer to? Within the world of scholarship there is no agreement as to "who" is being referred to (Allman 2015, 206-209; Alexander 1962, 27-29; Brown 1988, 105-108; and Grayston 2000, 90). Many scholars believe the "who" being referred to is so well known within the community that the writer does not have to identify them specifically. Therefore, I John is written in the context of schism. Those who have fallen away from the truth were former members of the community; therefore, they do not need to be identified for the community because they are already known (I John 2:19) (Alexander 1962, 27-29; Brown 1988, 106; Grayston 2000, 90; and Waters 2016, 29-48).

Further, a growing number of scholars understand that the writer is less concerned with the "who" and more concerned with the "what". What are those opposed to the Johannine proclamation of God's redemptive action revealed and incarnate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus teaching (Alexander 1962, 48-51; Brown 1988, 110-111; Grayston 2000 89-93; and Waters 2016, 33-34)? Therefore, the writer purposefully ignores the identity of the "anti-Christ" so that the writer can address the real issue which is "what is being taught" and the need for the redemptive act of Jesus.

The challenge of the "need" for forgiveness and therefore Christ has occurred many times throughout history and been addressed by many of Christianity's greatest minds. Steve Harper summarizes John Wesley, the

eighteenth-century theologian and evangelist with these words, “For you see, we need a Savior only if we need saving; we cannot save ourselves. This is precisely what John Wesley, in his doctrine of sin, calls us to acknowledge” (Harper 2003, 23).

In Johannine terms the words anti-Christ (I John 2:18, I John 2:22 and I John 4:3), Satan and Devil (I John 3:8 and I John 3:10), refer to those who are teaching things that are opposed to the Good News of Jesus Christ and God’s atoning sacrifice through the cross of Christ. This needs to be emphasized because of Satan and devil imagery that developed in the Middle Ages and culminated with Dante’s *Inferno* which was completed around AD 1320. During the Middle Ages (roughly AD 500-1500), a time of the black plague, death, despair, and seemingly constant upheaval and threat to one’s very existence, devil imagery standardized in terrifying horns and demons, provided for many Christian believers a way of explaining the world around them and a source of living with perseverance and hope. Within devil mythology is the Christian conviction that ultimately God prevails. Many believers today continue to find great strength and encouragement in this type of imagery.

Recognizing that the Johannine use of the terms anti-Christ, Satan and Devil differ from Middle Ages mythology allows us to ask the question as to what the Johannine writer is referring to with these titles. Specifically, the writer is drawing us to the sin being committed by the anti-Christ.

This leads us to a Johannine understanding of sin. Again, to hear the Johannine community on its own terms it is necessary to understand sin on their

own terms. Within many Christian communities in western civilization the focus on sin has been a focus on action. This can easily develop into groups that are either right with God due to their actions or wrong with God due to their actions. This then creates in groups (included) and out groups (excluded).

The fifteenth century Christian, St. John of the Cross, challenged this type of thinking when he penned these words,

When our hearts are free from liking and judging people merely according to their natural gifts we are not held captive by external and changing charms. We are instead free to love people as they are, and we can penetrate more easily to their core personality, their true goodness". (Ruth 1985, 46)

John Wesley (1703-1791) also challenged an understanding of sin focusing on human action. Harper writes concerning Wesley,

Wesley spoke of sin in relational terms. His classic definition is that sin is 'every voluntary breach of the law of love'. At its base, sin is broken relationship, whether that brokenness is expressed toward other or toward God. And it is important to note that the breach is conscious and willful. (Harper 2003, 23)

Within the Johannine understanding of sin, it is not the action of the anti-Christ rather it is the teaching of the anti-Christ. This begs the question, "What is the teaching that is defined as sin?" It is the proclamation of the anti-Christ that claims to be sinless (I John 1:8 and repeated I John 1:10) (Brown 1982, 206-207, McDermond 2011, 66 and Rensberger 1997, 53-55).

If one has attained a state of sinlessness then there is no need for God's atoning sacrifice revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This teaching is refuted by stating the truth and expanding on the implications of this truth. "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:1-2). The writer returns to the centrality of this theme in I John 4:10 and I John 5:6.

The writer then moves to reveal three distinguishing characteristics of the anti-Christ balanced by three distinguishing characteristics of God's faithful communities that have a role to play in God's salvific intent. The three distinguishing characteristics of the anti-Christ include, first, what does the community confess concerning Jesus (I John 4:3)? Second, does the love ethic move beyond one's community, or to say it another way to one's tribe (I John 2:11)? Third, where is the focus of the community (I John 4:10)? Is the focus of the community on self or is the focus of the community on the proclamation of God and what God has done and is doing?

The three distinguishing characteristics of God's faithful community include, first, love in action, first within the community of believers (I John 1:10) and then extends out. Second, what is being said about Jesus. Twice it is repeated that a confession of Christ is already evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit (I John 4:2-3a and I John 4:15). This two-fold repetition parallels the two-fold accusation toward the anti-Christ (I John 1:8 and I John 1:10). For the Johannine community this is the rock within diversity which is a manifestation of God's universal salvific will. Third, where is the focus of the community repeating the question of focus on self or what God has done and is doing (I John 4:7-11).

The writer then returns to the first distinguishing characteristic of love in action and continues to apply the implications of God's universal salvific will for the community. "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world" (I John 4:14). Therefore, I John 4:20-21 is said in light of I John 4:14 and as a result the ethic of love in action is now extended to all for now "those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (I John 4:21), which includes all persons (Alexander 1962, 108-114; Black 1998, 432; Brown 1982, 563-65; Loader 1992, 57-58; McDermond 2011, 232; Sloyan 1995, 49; and Thomas 2004, 237). Love, guided by the Holy Spirit, now extends to all persons since it has already been established that God has created all (John 1:5); blessed all (John 1:9) and seeks to redeem all to Him. "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32) a passage referring to the cross of Christ (Brown 1988, 69; McPolin 1979, 135-138; Senior 1991, 104; and Sloyan 1988, 159).

### Universalism and Johannine Theology

God's universal salvific intent does not mean universalism within Johannine theology. Oxford American Dictionary defines universalism as "a person who believes that all humankind will eventually be saved" (*Oxford American Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). This is not consistent with Johannine theology. James McPolin writes concerning judgment and John 5:19-30.

But there is also an obverse side of 'eternal life' in the Fourth Gospel which is called 'judgment'. This, however, is not an action of God by which He discriminates between good and evil; neither is it a positive action of God or of Jesus. Rather, it is what happens to man when he deliberately rejects Jesus and the life-giving communion He offers. Besides, it is not a power of the Father or of Jesus as distinct from their

power to give life, but it is a self-deserved reality, an action by which man condemns (judges) himself in rejecting Jesus. Thus 'judgment' is self-condemnation, man's refusal of life either now or 'on the last day' (John 5:24, 5:29 and 11:24). Yet Jesus has power to give life and to 'judge' in so far as He reveals God and offers life so that a division takes place before him: some believe, others reject Him and 'judge' or condemn themselves (John 3:16-31). There is also a 'resurrection of judgment' (that is, of final self-condemnation) at the end for those who have done evil (5:29). (McPolin 1979, 57-58)

The implications of I John speak directly into times of disagreement and even schism within Christian communities. Seen in one light it serves as a warning for Christian communities against those who proclaim to be sinless thus denying the need for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who is the atoning sacrifice and light of the world. It also provides parameters for false teachings that may develop over time.

Seen from an opposite perspective, I John serves as a means of recognizing and celebrating when God is expanding the community's collective understanding of God's love and salvific intent once again. If separating communities of faith continue to demonstrate the distinguishing characteristics of God's faithful communities, meaning a love ethic first within one's community of believers and with God's grace extends out beyond one's community to ultimately all persons. Second, a common confession in Jesus who is the Son of God, and Jesus' atoning sacrifice is God's gift of salvation. Third, the faith community's focus remains on God and what God has done and is doing. Then God be praised! Unity within diversity is being manifested within these communities of faith. God's intent is becoming more known in heaven and on earth.



Finally, and this serves as a warning for faithful communities, love in action towards fellow believers is a distinguishing characteristic of the faithful Christian. Further, since unity within diversity is no longer rooted in agreement then the witness of Christian communities who do not always agree yet continue to demonstrate love in action to each other serve as a beacon for the world. In other words, it becomes an intricate role that Christian communities must play in participation with God's universal salvific will.

#### Implications for Professional Chaplaincy

Professional chaplains are called to serve all people. Further, the heart of chaplaincy is presence and representation not proclamation and conversion. Understanding the dignity and blessedness of each individual person is natural for many Evangelical Christians (and most Christians in general) because of the firm belief that God creates all human life as a visible act of God's love. In this way, the Evangelical Christian can be with and serve all persons by being an authentic and compassionate presence.

#### **Theological Research**

The theological foundations highlighted in this section include first the logic of mission that extends to all persons as a theme of God's salvific intent. Second, it includes a reflection on the Trinity and how a Trinitarian understanding of unity within diversity can dialogue with various perspectives on unity including homogeny, dualism, and pluralism.

Richard Bauckham examined God's universal salvific intent and the logic of mission in a postmodern world in the book *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Bauckham summarized this point writing,

It was never God's intention to bless Abraham purely for his and his descendants' sake. It was never God's intention to reveal himself to Israel only for Israel's sake. It was never God's intention to base his kingdom in Zion only so that he might rule an immediate locality. God's purpose in each of these singular choices was universal; that the blessing of Abraham might overflow to all the families of the earth, that God's self-revelation to Israel might make God known to all nations, that from Zion his rule might extend to the ends of the earth. (Bauckham 2003, 46)

Walter Brueggemann writes concerning the logic of mission and the need for "humanity not defined by commodity". Brueggemann analyzes that "despair is the defining mark of the context for church mission in the twenty-first century" and the Christian as a "community of hope" must engage this reality (Brueggemann 2001, 155).

In the book *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context*, Brueggemann includes an essay written by theologian Janos D. Pasztor concerning the centrality of Trinitarian theology,

It is Trinitarian theology that gives us the tools for critical examination of the ideas and practices of the church and its mission, past and present. Wherever this idea of thinking prevails, creation, matter history, and culture are taken seriously. Wherever it is missing, the way is open for all kinds of false views about the world and about the nature of the church and its mission. Trinitarian theology could have served- and in many cases it has served- to render help for critical self-examination, correction, and reconstruction of the life and mission of the church. (Brueggemann 2001, 146)

Robert Kress speaks into tendencies for group homogeneity with insights from the Trinity. Kress relates this to the Church universal the “One Church of the One God whose oneness is not monistic but communional” (Kress 1990).

Marianne Meyers Thompson provides insight into Irenaeus’ thought. Thompson writes concerning Irenaeus (130-202 AD) and his struggles with early Gnosticism who sought to demote the creator God to a secondary and inferior status. Thompson writes, “Irenaeus combats the Gnostics who wished to sever the God who created from the God who saves” (Thompson 2014, 155). In this way, Irenaeus’ understanding of the co-equality in the Trinity frees us from dualistic thinking.

Kevin Giles emphasizes that,

diversity is of the nature of the church, not a sin to be overcome. Unity within diversity inherent in the divine Trinity of persons that in an analogous way should characterize the life of the church in its local, regional, international, and universal dimension. This fellowship does not aim to overcome all diversity; but rather to embrace it in dynamic, relational, and growing bond of love and understanding. (Giles 1995, 202)

Irwyn L. Ince Jr. examines the Trinity and its relationship to the human community. Ince writes,

For humanity to be the image of God, it must embody beautiful community-unity in diversity, diversity in unity. If God displays its beauty in the Trinitarian life, we should expect that beauty to be reflected in the humanity that images Him. While each person is royalty, we find the fullest expression of the image in the community. (Ince 2020, 55)

A great contribution within professional chaplaincy occurred when board-certified professional chaplaincy within Board Certified Chaplains (BCC) broadened the scope within which professional chaplains serve to include all

persons. One can argue that this contribution accurately reflects Ince's understanding of a beautiful community. At the same time this broadening of scope has presented challenges. Since professional chaplaincy would occur within a pluralistic society and include all people it was initially assumed that pluralism would be a necessary perspective to be an effective professional chaplain. Further, and this will be examined in detail in the chapter Review of Contemporary Literature section Shifting from Pluralism to Authenticity, the initial assumption of pluralism has ironically led to a struggle with inclusion of faith perspectives that hold an absolute truth.

Why might pluralism struggle with inclusion of those who hold an absolute truth, including the evangelical Christian chaplain? How might the evangelical Christian professional chaplain speak into these challenges? How might the evangelical Christian professional chaplain assist the field of professional chaplaincy and the world at large to live into its stated goal of coexistence more faithfully?

One possibility is the reliance and misuse of stage theories within Christian faith development. When I was in seminary (1993-1996) the book *Faith Development and Pastoral Care: Theology and Pastoral Care* written by James W. Fowler was popular with many of the professors and students. This book was originally written in 1987. Nearly twenty years later during my Clinical Pastoral Education these ideas and theories were taught once again.

Fowler developed seven stages of faith and human becoming. These stages include Primal Faith, Intuitive-Projective Faith, Mythical-Literal Faith,

Synthetic-Conventional Faith, Individualistic-Reflective Faith, Conjunctive Faith and Universalizing Faith. Fowler's intent in describing these stages was to find a way to group people and therefore best serve each group of people. However, it has not always been lived out as intended.

A problem occurs when we begin to rate these stages as one being over or better than another. For example, if a person believes they have "attained" the stage of Conjunctive Faith, then it would be easy to dismiss those people and ideas that are "below" them. While this is contrary to Fowler's thought, in practical terms it can frequently occur.

Have you ever been in a room when the speaker suddenly changes their voice to "mimic" another group of people? Perhaps the individual suddenly begins speaking with an Asian, or African American, or Hispanic, or Appalachian accent. This can be a subtle way of dividing and rating people, creating a very difficult work environment for the person who is part of the "accent" group.

These are situations where it appears the speaker (at times the person in a leadership or teaching role) is placing themselves above another group of people. This division is not the goal of church ministry and professional chaplaincy, however, in practice it can happen.

Robert K. Atkin spoke into the challenge of Fowler's Theory and the possibility that it could become a way of separating and dividing groups in a hierarchical manner. Atkin writes,

Nobody wants to be at a low stage. All western life is geared to advancement: the promotion of work; the passing of education qualifications; moving up a year at school; buying a bigger house. Only in the kingdom of God do we see the counter to this- where

we are encouraged to consider others better than ourselves and choose the lower position in life rather than the higher. Implicit in Fowler's theory is the notion that the next stage is better than the former. (Atkin, 2014)

This is a similar challenge as that experienced by Irenaeus where some Gnostic thinkers were "rating God" with the demotion of the creator to the status of secondary deity. In this case some argued that God be understood in stages where a saving God was superior to a God of creation.

In 2000 Fowler seems to recognize the misuse of his stage development theory by updating his work in the book *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*. In this book Fowler addresses the misuse of rating one stage of faith development over another. Fowler writes,

The crucial point to be grasped is that the image of human completion or wholeness offered by faith development theory is not an estate to be attained or a stage to be realized or a stage to be realized. Rather, it is a way of being and moving, a way of pilgrimage (Fowler 2000, 60). Later Fowler concludes, the goal, however, is not for everyone to reach the stage of universalizing faith. Rather, it is for each person or group to open themselves, as radically as possible- within the structures of their present stage or transition- to synergy with Spirit. The dynamics of that openness- and the extraordinary openings that come with "saving Grace"- operates as a lure and power toward ongoing growth and partnership with the Spirit and in the direction of universalizing faith. (Fowler 2000, 60)

The Trinity and the understanding of unity within diversity and diversity within unity can speak into and assist the misuse of Fowler's Theory that has, at times, been used to divide and rate groups of people.

#### Biblical Images on Unity

This chapter has focused on the contribution found within the Trinity concerning unity within diversity and how that speaks into current challenges

within professional chaplaincy. In truth, it must be acknowledged that there are various images and forms of unity within the Bible.

The Bible has both dualistic and paradoxical thinking. Some of us within the human family are more apt to embrace dualistic thinking. Some of us in the human family only know peace in paradoxical thinking. Each can add hope and meaning within individual, contextual and societal levels.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us of God's vantage point and our human limitations. This then allows the believer filled by the Holy Spirit to move beyond the limits of the human imagination when exploring human challenges. Isaiah writes, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8).

The Trinity is an example of paradoxical thinking and is not limited to the confines of the human imagination. An example of paradoxical thinking within the Bible would include I Cor. 15:53, *"For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality."*

The previous section examined Johannine theology and unity within diversity rooted in common confession in Christ which is an indication of the Holy Spirit and love in action that moves beyond one's community and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit seeks to include all people. These teachings echo John 15, where Jesus refers to himself as *"the true vine"* (John 15:1a) and recognizes the need to remain connected to the vine to bear fruit. Jesus said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear*

*much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Later, Jesus repeats the love commandment, *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”* (John 15:12).

The Apostle Paul uses the image of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12-14-20) and moves us towards unity within authenticity. The Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu picks up on this theme writing, “God gives us the freedom to be authentically ourselves” (Tutu 2004, 34). Later Tutu wrote concerning the issue of power and service as it relates to community.

Jesus tried to propagate a new paradigm of power. Power and might in His paradigm are not meant for self-aggrandizement, not meant to be lorded over others. Power and might are not for throwing our weight about, disregarding any laws and conventions we may find inconvenient. Power in this paradigm is for service- for being compassionate, for being gentle, for being caring- for being servant to all. (Tutu 2004, 121)

Within a Trinitarian worldview diversity is something to be expected and celebrated. Through God’s active presence and guidance unity among differences can be realized as a function of the Holy Spirit. Further, authenticity is valued and an indication of the spark of the Divine that is known in all persons.

### Practical Implications for Professional Chaplaincy

In a paradoxical way within the ministry of professional chaplaincy, the reality of pluralism and the mystery of the Trinity push those who dwell within belief systems containing an absolute truth (including the evangelical Christian professional chaplain) to live into the truth of the blessedness of all persons more faithfully, the world as one’s true mission field, and the need to faithfully seek to be healing agents in all situations and with all people. Pluralistic thought and serious consideration of the Trinity also help push the evangelical Christian



outside its tendency for group homogeneity as noted by Robert Kress at the beginning of the section. At the same time, those who dwell within belief systems that contain an absolute truth (including the evangelical Christian professional chaplain) push those living within a pluralistic worldview to live within their own worldview and vision more faithfully; therefore, not falling into the reality of power and division within community but rather living with harmony within community which is the original goal of pluralistic thought.

Following the contributions of the Trinity and Christian thinkers like St. Paul and Desmond Tutu we are led to the concept of authenticity. It is here that the connection with professional chaplaincy is strong since authenticity is an essential part of the ministry of professional chaplaincy and every spiritual care encounter.

In practical terms this would mean large Spiritual Care departments would seek a vast array of professional chaplains including those working from a pluralistic worldview and those working from an absolute truth worldview. In this way, there is a role for the evangelical Christian in the ministry of professional chaplaincy. In fact, there is a *necessary* role for the evangelical Christian in the ministry of professional chaplaincy.

### **Historical Research**

The historical research covers a brief examination of representative ministry, which is the heart of professional chaplaincy. Leonardo Boff places Jesus as the archetypal representation of representative ministry that is focused on peace and healing. Boff writes, "It was Jesus who taught us to insist even to

the point of pestering (Luke 11:5-8). He will give us his peace, a peace achieved through service rather than through power” (Boff 2001, 17).

### St. Francis of Assisi

Throughout Christian history there have been times when it became necessary for the Christian witness to refocus the Christian vision towards the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the voiceless. St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) challenged the church and Christian witness of his day in such a simple and powerful way that it continues to speak to many throughout the world today. Donald Soto recognizes the power of St. Francis’s witness, “His life and example- and not let it be stressed, anything specific he said and wrote- had an integrity that challenges our presumptions about what constitutes a good life, not to say a respectable approach to religion” (Soto 2002, xvii).

Julian Green examined the embodiment of two distinct currents in Franciscan spirituality: the active life and the contemplative life (Green 1983, 142). The professional chaplain is a physical presence that embodies the active life of spiritual care with patients, families, and staff.

Boff describes Franciscan spirituality writing,

This is the path of simplicity, of discovering God in nature, of simple love for all creatures, of almost childlike trust in goodness of persons and in imperturbable joy, even in the face of the most poignant dramas of human life. (Boff 2001, 2)

To understand St. Francis and his continuing significance it is necessary to explore the age and historical moment Francis lived. He was born in Assisi in the town of Umbria in central Italy. The ground was fertile, and ninety percent of the population engaged in agriculture (Soto 2002, 2). It was a time of upheaval,

war, and black plague. It was a feudal society with distinct classes and wide divisions between the rich and the poor. Many preachers primarily and often unsuccessfully “appealed for pity from their listeners, whom they threatened with hell if they failed to give alms” (Green 1983, 28). Then in 1187, when Francis was six years old, the unthinkable happened. Green writes, “news that the sultan had captured Jerusalem shook all of Christendom” (Green 1983, 20).

Francis believed and embodied the believer as a “little Christ” thus emphasizing the love of God and the incarnational nature of the believer within one’s community. This is very similar to the professional chaplain’s ministry of compassionate presence. Legend says that Francis taught “When all else fails; use words”.

Francis made the “natural assumption of the equality of men” (Chesterton 2009, 46) a counter-cultural idea in a feudal world. This is much the same today, in the United States, where many believe the idea of the “American Dream” and subsequent social mobility no longer exists, where some believe the canceling of ideas and people is virtuous the counter-cultural assumption that all people are created by God and therefore equal may find receptive ears.

St. Francis serves as a model of representative ministry as a form of evangelism. Soto writes concerning the effectiveness of Francis and the five thousand who were drawn to a life of celibacy, poverty, and adoration of God through service to others,

It is impossible to overestimate the revolution that Francis effected. In the Middle Ages, as we have seen, the primary means of proclaiming the Gospel was through the monasteries, and people could learn Christian culture only by joining them. Francis, on the other hand, embraced a new

nonmonastic model of evangelism. Rather than inviting people out of the world and into places where he and his fraternity lived (as did cloistered monks), they went out to the people, meeting them wherever they were and speaking to them in their own language and style. Only 70 years after Francis's death, his friars were preaching in Asia and establishing faith in China. (Soto 2002, 99)

In a world that continues to see power and war as a means of social change it may be healing to return to the message of St. Francis. For Francis taught and lived out the idea that mercy and not might is the most effective and faithful form of evangelism.

Aimee Semple McPherson

Another model of representational ministry is the example of Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), the founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. As a young woman McPherson experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost. She describes this experience, "I had been born again and was a new creature in Christ Jesus" (McPherson 2021, 25-26). A description of her mission can be summarized in her own words,

Being called upon to endure hardness as a good soldier, and to bring back precious souls for Jesus, no matter hard the conflict, the Lord has put that within me which causes me to go through, refusing defeat, refusing even to be discouraged. (McPherson 2021, 14)

As a young woman she served as a missionary to China. During this time and not yet twenty years of age and pregnant with her first child McPherson held the hand of her husband as he died (McPherson 2021, 46). What impact might this have had on her understanding of the unity of the need for the word of God yoked with simple acts of human compassion? As a young woman and mother of two, McPherson nearly died from appendicitis. During this experience she had a

near death experience and healing she attributed to God (McPherson 2021, 52-53). How might these experiences later impact her understanding of the afterlife and relentless desire for others to know Jesus and therefore know paradise?

In January 1919, in the “spirit” of the modern-day chaplain, McPherson traveled to Tulsa, Oklahoma and moved towards the needs of others and in the middle of the ‘Spanish Influenza’ led revival.

According to her own account, while she was in Tulsa, she traveled the streets ministering to “epidemic victims.” Afternoons and evenings, McPherson and her band of workers would roll call through the streets and stop to minister to people on the street corners. Men and women came to Christ right on the sidewalk, as many as 20 at a time. (Isgrigg, 2020)

In 1923, McPherson founded the Foursquare Gospel Church, and built Angelus Temple, in Los Angeles. The movement has held a priority to mission, sending out missionaries and service to the poor. During the Great Depression she opened a commissary that fed more than 1.5 million people. McPherson modeled the need for evangelism as proclamation and representative ministry. Esther O. Cephas describes one of McPherson’s great contributions as “serving human needs while preaching salvation goes hand in hand” (Cephas 2022, 40).

The Foursquare Gospel Church has continued in McPherson’s spirit of going to others and serving others where they reside. The Foursquare Gospel Church has a long history of service to others and going to the needs of the people. In this regard chaplaincy is held in high regard. The mission statement of Foursquare International reads, “The chaplain’s mission is to be the presence of Christ in the midst of life’s crises, living the Foursquare Gospel in secular

environments, and sacrificially helping those in need to find wholeness, hope and healing” (foursquare.org).

Further, its blend of proclamation and representative ministry has yielded incredible fruit for God’s Kingdom and continues to grow from the seeds McPherson planted, Daniel Mark Epstein in his book *Sister Aimee: The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson* and her “Moses-like” legacy of “seeing the promised land”. Epstein notes that there were “410 churches in North America, 200 mission stations and about 29,000 members” when Aimee died (Epstein 1993, 440). When Epstein completed his book in 1993, he recorded that “there were 25,577 Foursquare churches in 74 countries, with a total of almost a million and seven hundred thousand members” (Epstein 1993, 440). Thirty years later this vine of Christ can be found in 150 countries, with 67,500 congregations and has 8.8 million members (foursquare.org).

#### Mother Teresa

More recently, is the twentieth century example of Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu (1910-1997). Born in Skopje, North Macedonia she was best known for her missionary work in Calcutta, India. Her simple acts of love and kindness made her known to the world as Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa felt called to serve the poor and destitute. She received permission from the Holy See to start her own order, “The Missionaries of Charity” whose primary task was to love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after (nobelprize.org). In the book *Mother Teresa: In the Heart of the World: Thoughts, Stories, & Prayers* is a piece of writing that summarizes her

understanding of representative ministry. Mother Teresa writes concerning her belief and understanding of suffering, “The biggest disease is not leprosy or TB. It is loneliness. It is being rejected. It is forgetting joy, love and the human touch” (Towey 2022, 95).

The professional chaplain, in the spirit of representative ministry, meets this greatest need of suffering. The professional chaplain is a physical, compassionate presence that reflects value, meaning and dignity of the other through one’s compassionate presence, active listening, physical touch, empathetic listening, and encouragement. Towey describes Mother Teresa’s ministry as one “based in the belief of the actual presence of God in the person of the poor” which she took from the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew 25:45 “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these you did it for me” (Towey 2022, 4).

Mother Teresa gave a voice to the poor and voiceless and her legacy continues to speak into the needs of the forgotten and powerless throughout the world. A summary of her mission and ministry can be read in her own words,

There is much suffering in the world- very much. Material suffering from hunger, suffering from homelessness, from all kinds of disease, but I still think that the greatest suffering is being lonely, feeling unloved, just having no one. I have come more and more to realize that it is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can ever experience. In these times of development, the whole world runs and is hurried. But there are some who fall down on the way and have no strength to go ahead. These are the ones we must care about. Let us be very sincere in our dealings with each other and have the courage to accept each other as we are. Do not be surprised at or become preoccupied with each other’s failure; rather see and find the good in each other, for each of us is created in the image of God. Jesus has said it beautifully: “I am the vine; you are the branches”. The life-giving sap that flows from the vine through each of the branches is the same. (Teresa 1997, 14-15)

## Professional Chaplain as Evangelist

In this section I examined the legitimacy of representative ministry by looking at three historical figures: St. Francis of Assisi, Aimee Semple McPherson and Mother. Professional chaplaincy at its heart is a representative ministry, and at this time I will examine different questions that speak into our contemporary situation. In a multi-cultural reality can representative ministry act as an effective tool of evangelism? Can representative ministry evangelize a people and, in some cases, elicit Christian revival?

Earlier I highlighted the ministry of Mother Teresa. Is it possible that God used her ministry in an evangelical way that breathed life into societal change? According to the Pew Research Center in the article written by Stephanie Kramer there were eight million Christians or 2.3% of the population in 1951. If 2.3% of the current Indian population were Christian, it would mean between twenty-eight million and thirty-one million Christians living in India. However, the actual number of Christians in India may be much higher.

Philip Jenkins examines the growth of Christianity in various locations throughout the world. He writes that modest estimates say that today 6% of the Indian population is Christian and that growth is occurring throughout economic, regional, and cultural backgrounds. He cites the 2000 World Christian Encyclopedia for this information. In the year 2000 this would have meant sixty-two million Christians in India (Jenkins 2007, 83-84). If this 6% is used in the year 2023 it would mean nearly eighty-three million Christians today in India.



Whether the figure is twenty-eight or nearly eighty-three million the growth of Christianity since 1951 has been staggering. One can only imagine the impact that the representative ministry begun by Mother Teresa in 1950 might have had on the growth in Christianity in India.

Each of these individuals, St. Francis of Assisi, Aimee Semple McPherson and Mother Teresa engaged in the challenges of their day and as a result many came to know and love God in Christ Jesus. From this perspective and with the incredible fruit that their lives and ministries produced and considering the continued fruit inspired by their witness and the abundant fruit being produced by their lives of those who seek to follow in their witness and spirit it can be concluded that these individuals served in evangelical ways. In this way, the Evangelical Christian serving as a professional chaplain can also be used by God in evangelical ways and in ways that grow the Kingdom of God.

Chapter three will explore current literature concerning professional chaplaincy. All the literature reviewed is current being written 2000-current. The literature will explore the growth of professional chaplaincy and a paradigm shift that is occurring within the profession. Previously, the professional chaplain has been viewed as an integral member of a team and the professional chaplain was understood as an important component in “how” a patient’s condition improves and is experienced. Current evidenced based research is demonstrating the validity of this paradigm and adding to it. Current evidenced based research is finding that quality care from a professional chaplain not only can influence “how”

a patient recovers and experiences their situation but can also often impact “if” a patient improves and recovers from their ailment.

## CHAPTER THREE

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature will examine recent shifts that have occurred and are occurring within professional chaplaincy. First, the shift from the professional chaplain serving one's parish and like-minded believers to the professional chaplain serving the world and all people. Second, the shift from pluralism within professional chaplaincy to authenticity in personhood and practice by the professional chaplain. Third, a shift found within the medical world discovered in evidenced-based studies that consistently demonstrate that effective spiritual care can influence not only *how* a patient may get better but also can influence *if* a patient gets better.

Challenges and opportunities that developed in professional chaplaincy because of changes made in the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy* will be discussed. These challenges and opportunities developed in 2004 when the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy* broadened the scope within which professional chaplains serve. In the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy*, the Association of Professional Chaplains mandated that "chaplains are to provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including some but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual and religious practices" (Cadge and Sigalow 2013, 47). This led to the perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig where it was believed that having a

pluralistic worldview, meaning no tradition has the 'corner on truth' would be a requirement to be an effective professional chaplain (Fukuyama and Sevig 2004, 29).

### Expansion of the Scope of Chaplaincy

The movement of scope in ministry to include all people has led to growth in the profession. Areas of growth in professional chaplaincy would include prison chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, veterans' affairs chaplaincy, disaster chaplaincy, transportation chaplaincy, college and campus chaplaincy, psychiatric care chaplaincy, workplace chaplaincy, police-firefighter-emergency medical technician chaplaincy, marketplace professional chaplaincy, professional/collegiate sports chaplaincy, hospice chaplaincy, and healthcare/hospital chaplaincy. The recent article titled *Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers: The Emergence and Growth of Chaplaincy Programs in Theological Education* discovered "substantial growth in chaplaincy-focused programs in theological schools in the last twenty years" (Cadge et al 2020). This change in scope of ministry has also created opportunities to minister with persons, especially young people, who might not trust organized religion and clergy in general, but who are willing to trust a chaplain. Therefore, moving into the future it may be chaplains who will be the primary healers to individuals in the public sphere during times of crisis (Cadge et al. 2020).

The direction of the ministry of the professional chaplain is to go to where the people reside and live. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan calls chaplains and spiritual care providers "secular priests" or "ministers without portfolios," arguing that

chaplains are “strangely necessary figures in negotiating the public life of religion today” (Cadge and Rambo 2022, 3). Jan McCormack, a leader in the formation of chaplaincy programs highlighted the unique characteristics of professional chaplain. McCormack explains, “We chaplains don’t wait for people to come to us. We go to them. And we’re typically working in someone else’s work center” (Cadge et al. 2020).

Tanya Erzen took a deep dive into the realities in today’s prison system in the United States. Erzen makes clear that the book is not written to examine the reasons behind the current realities, but begs the question, “why are the faith-based ministries predominately evangelical?” (Erzen 2017, 4-6 and 15). Finally, she simply looks at the differences between a prison system based on a warehouse mentality or a rehabilitation mentality and acknowledges the unmistakable changes within the lives of individual prisoners and prison facilities as a whole due to faith-based ministries.

Larry Bennett gives insight into the growth of professional chaplaincy within law enforcement and fire/rescue. Bennett, a member of the Federation of Fire Chaplains (FOFC) works as a chaplain of the Winter Haven Police Department and the Polk County Fire/Rescue in Florida. Bennett reflects on his initial experience as a first responder chaplain and his recognition that “there were a few/rescue chaplains but not many across the United States” (Bennett 2016, 9). Later, he speaks of the incredible growth in professional chaplaincy writing “here in our county we have 58 chaplains just in law enforcement and

fire/rescue, and that does not include the hospital chaplains, or hospice chaplains” (Bennett 2016, 23).

The book *Sports Chaplaincy: Trends, Issues and Debates* explored the unique position, growth and opportunities that occur within Sports Chaplaincy. Sports chaplaincy is another area of growth within professional chaplaincy that occurred when the scope of ministry for the professional chaplain broadened from one’s parish to now include the world. John B. White writes, “Christian sports chaplains undertake pastoral care as specialists in public contexts outside traditional places of congregational life and worship, not unlike chaplains in other secular settings” (Parker et. al. 2016, 107).

The growth of professional chaplaincy is not limited to the United States. J. Stuart Weir examined the growth of sports chaplaincy from a global perspective. Weir examined how “Chapel is about bringing Church to the players” (Parker et al. 2016, 9). This is an example of the professional chaplain going towards people and being in ministry where people live.

Weir cites Tyndall who examined the introduction of formal chaplaincy at the Olympics.

The first modern Olympics to feature a formal chaplaincy programme with a team of international chaplains was Seoul in 1988 where 7,697 attended the chapel which was set aside in the Olympic Village for religious services. In total some 184 services were held in seven different languages with 2,046 individuals from 102 different nations counseled. (Parker et al. 2016, 15)

Professional chaplaincy is not limited to traditional forms of church. Nick J. Watson examined the unique position of sports chaplaincy in the Western world which is characterized by what can be described as a ‘fatherless generation’

(Parker et al. 2016, 71). Watson considers “the vital role in addressing the wounds of the fatherless in sporting environments” (Parker et al. 2016, 78).

Watson concludes,

Herein lies the mystery and beauty of servant-hearted chaplaincy to those sport. A paradoxical role in which, at times, little seems to be achieved, yet where the Kingdom of God is manifest and the heart of the Father is revealed to players (and support staff) who are in a state of crisis or transition, experiencing failure, grief or stress- or who simply need a non-judgmental friend or mentor whom they can trust. (Parker et al. 2016, 79)

The project thesis and corresponding manual sought to identify and illustrate how God is using professional chaplaincy in a multicultural reality to reach the unchurched and those not having their needs met by the traditional forms of church. The literary review highlighted a variety of places and areas where the hypothesis concerning God’s activity through professional chaplaincy has been confirmed.

Modern day chaplaincy has grown and continues to grow in our day. Examining modern day professional chaplaincy, it can be understood as another moment in history when God is using forms of representative ministry that moves towards people. Where ministry occurs where a person lives and in the context of what is being experienced in a person’s life.

#### Shifting from Pluralism to Authenticity

The perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig who discussed the need for a pluralistic worldview to be an effective professional chaplain is being challenged by a new perspective of authenticity and personhood. Zucker, Bradley and Tucker question if inauthenticity in practice by the professional

chaplain may do harm to both those being served and the chaplain. Instead, the writers advocate for authenticity by the professional chaplain and for the professional chaplain to make referrals to other professional chaplains or clergy who can best serve a patient's and families' needs (Zucker, Bradley and Tucker 2007).

There are times when an Orthodox Jewish patient might require prayers that can only be authentically said by an Orthodox Rabbi. There are times, when only an Imam or trained member of the Islamic community can perform the ritual bathing of a stillborn infant. There are times when a Catholic priest is needed to perform the Sacrament of the Sick. There are times when an evangelical or Pentecostal Christian might need to have a prayer spoken in tongues or concluded with the words, "we pray in Jesus' name." Professional chaplains are called to serve all people, and part of that service is to have the wisdom and humility to know when it is best practice to reach out to clergy who can then best serve the patient and situation.

Military chaplain John D. Lang highlights the importance of incarnational relationships (Lang 2010, 155-56, 201) based on the authenticity of the chaplain (Lang 2010, 283). Lang writes, "it has also been argued that evangelicals can continue to serve in this vital ministry without sacrificing fidelity to their own Christian communities, if they are creative and understand their own limits" (Lang 2010, 283).

Otis Corbitt, also a military chaplain, echoes the necessity for authenticity in the often-incarnational ministry of chaplaincy (Corbitt 2020, 36-37) and further



emphasizes the reality that much of the authority of a chaplain comes from their authenticity and congruency in their moral and ethical character (Corbitt 2020, 50). Corbitt writes, “Since so much of the authority of chaplains comes from their moral and ethical character, chaplains must exhibit ethics and morality of the highest caliber” (Corbitt 2020, 50).

First responder chaplain Larry Bennett expresses the need for authenticity in this way “Consistency of presence, complete honesty in all matters, and true humility, which is known as servanthood, will be what earns the trust, confidence, and respect necessary for meaningful relationships and effective ministry inside the ‘Blue Wall’” (Bennett 2016, 10).

The professional chaplain as an authentic compassionate presence is an essential trait in any spiritual care encounter. From a Christian perspective this builds upon biblical imagery. The apostle Paul uses the image of the body of Christ and moves us towards unity within diversity within authenticity (I Cor. 12:14-20). The Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes, “God gives us the freedom to be authentically ourselves” (Tutu 2004, 34).

This shift in thought in the world of professional chaplaincy is occurring due to two reasons. The first is, the witness of professional chaplains since 2004 and the *Common Standards of Professional Chaplains* mandate who have served effectively as professional chaplains and do not hold a pluralistic worldview. Second, is the realization that the necessity for a pluralistic worldview effectively excludes anyone or any faith tradition that has an absolute truth.

Further, if there is a necessity for a pluralistic worldview to be an effective professional chaplain then that becomes an absolute truth.

As explored previously, professional chaplaincy occurs in many different contexts and there are several endorsing agencies. At the same time, many if not most institutions require full-time chaplains to receive board certification. Further, many institutions require certification through Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc. (BCCI) an affiliate of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). This project thesis advocates for the inclusion of those persons of strong religious convictions, including evangelical Christians. These faith traditions that hold an absolute truth cannot and should not concede forms of service in professional chaplaincy. Conceding service in positions that require BCCI accreditation would result as missing incredible opportunities to serve people that God is creating and injure the profession of BCCI chaplaincy by narrowing its scope of those served authentically by the profession.

Authenticity in a chaplain's ministry is a competency located twice within the BCCI requirements. All Competencies are from Board of Chaplaincy Inc. an affiliate of Association of Professional Chaplains ([www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)). First, within Section II: Professional Identity and Conduct Competencies, PIC 2: "Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect professional practice." A second place this is located is Section III: Professional Practice Skills Competencies, PPS1: "Establish, deepen, and conclude spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect." Proficiency in these competencies is necessary. When a

professional chaplain becomes aware of who they are on a deep level they can then use this tool of self-awareness of who they are as a resource for providing spiritual care for patients, families, and staff.

The Apostle Paul wrote “for whenever I am weak then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:10b). Those who have experienced grief are often able to tap into this aspect of who they are to simply be an authentic, compassionate, non-anxious presence within another who is experiencing intense grief without having to emotionally or physically “escape” the situation. Henri Nouwen explores this principle of a person’s wounds transformed by God to become a vehicle of healing to others in his book *The Wounded Healer*.

#### Professional Chaplaincy and Improved Patient Outcomes

A second reason for the growth of professional chaplaincy is the increasing awareness of positive outcomes for those being served by the professional chaplain. This developing base of research is most notably found in healthcare, patient satisfaction scores and patient outcomes. The previous working paradigm considered how a professional chaplain working with a team of professionals can affect “how” a patient recovers or experiences their condition. Within this traditional understanding the role of the professional chaplain has existed as part of a team providing patient-centered care to the individual patient (Wirpsa et al. 2019). The new developing paradigm in professional chaplaincy includes the “how” spiritual care provided by a professional chaplain can improve patient outcomes. The new developing paradigm in professional chaplaincy also includes evidence-based research that indicates that the professional chaplain

serving the spiritual care needs of another can impact *if* a patient gets better and the patient's and family's overall satisfaction.

Piderman and associates conducted a survey at the Mayo Clinic that reported 39% of patients and families ranked the chaplain's intervention as very, or somewhat important when making difficult medical decisions (Piderman et al. 2008). A recent study examined the impact of chaplains attending to the needs of families and loved ones of a patient who had an extended stay within an Intensive Care Unit. The study reported found that those who received intensive spiritual care were "three times more likely to have clinically important reduction in anxiety" (Religion News Service 2023). Another study examined the positive role of the professional chaplain among African American patients and families facing end-of-life decisions (Grant et al. 2015).

A research article titled, *A National Study on Chaplaincy Services and End-of-Life Outcomes* suggested that chaplaincy services may play a role in end-of-life care services in increased hospice enrollment. This increased hospice enrollment often correlates to more patients fulfilling their wishes to die in their home. This function of the professional chaplain has then correlated to greater satisfaction rates among families who believe the spiritual needs of themselves, and their loved ones have been valued, honored, and cared for (Flannelly et al. 2012).

These evidence-based studies demonstrate the effectiveness of BCC competencies in practice. Pastoral competency PAS2: "Provide effective pastoral support that contributes to the well-being of patients, their families and staff." The

professional chaplain is a part of an interdisciplinary team and provides specific roles within this capacity. Professional competencies PRO2: “Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships” and PRO4: “Support, promote and encourage ethical decision-making and care” support this team approach. The above evidence-based studies demonstrate the importance of the professional chaplain in these difficult situations.

A growing number of studies have examined the role of spiritual care by studying the effects of a person’s perspective on finding meaning in life, social connectedness, and loneliness. Independent studies conducted by Stanford University and an ongoing British study on older adults titled *English Longitudinal Study of Aging* found that the feeling that one’s life has meaning is associated with positive health outcomes (Parker 2014, Denworth and Waves 2019). For many people personal faith is a source of meaning. A professional chaplain seeks to bring forth whatever has given the patient, family, or staff member hope, meaning, and strength in the past. In this way, the professional chaplain assists the patient, family, or staff member to re-establish their connection with whatever has previously given their lives hope, meaning, and strength. This function of the professional chaplain builds upon the work of Benedetti who discovered that a patient’s thoughts, attitudes, and emotions play a central role in health outcomes (Benedetti 2013).

These evidence-based studies again demonstrate the importance of the professional chaplain. Pastoral Competency PAS1: “Establish, deepen and end pastoral relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect” and Pastoral

Competency PAS:3: “Provide pastoral care that reflects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices” emphasize the role of the professional chaplain in building authentic relationships and assisting patients and families in meaning making. At times the professional chaplain assists the patient and/or family to draw upon the strength, hope and wisdom known within their own faith tradition.

The professional chaplain working as part of the interdisciplinary team and providing the service known in Pastoral competency PAS:1: Establish, deepen and end pastoral relationships with sensitivity, openness and respect is uniquely positioned to address the issue of loneliness. Numerous evidence-based studies have examined the negative effects of loneliness.

The study, *Social Relationships and Mortality Risks: A Meta-analytic Review* began to investigate the negative health factors associated with loneliness (Holt-Lunstad, Smith and Layton 2010). The professional chaplain is uniquely positioned within the interdisciplinary team to address the issue of loneliness. Professional chaplains are trained to be a compassionate presence and are professionals who have the time to simply sit and be with patients and families.

Studies conducted independently by the Cleveland Clinic and Harvard Medical School concluded the effects of loneliness have reached epidemic levels in the United States and can be as much a threat to a person's health as obesity (Gupta 2015, Cleveland Clinic 2018). Further, studies have indicated that loneliness can have negative health risks and these negative health risks affect a

similar number of patients as those adversely affected by smoking (Harvard Medical School 2016; Frame 2017; Yeh 2017). A study conducted by the Mayo Clinic demonstrated that loneliness is linked to increased emergency department visits for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (Marty, Novotny and Benzo 2016). Another study suggested a link between loneliness and a higher susceptibility to Alzheimer's Disease (Cleveland Clinic 2017).

These findings are consistent from a Christian theological perspective. Desmond Tutu spoke into the issue of loneliness when he wrote the words, "God has made us in such a way that we need each other. We are made for companionship and relationship. It is not good for us to be alone" (Tutu 2004, 25).

The article *Spiritual Assessment in Mental Health Recovery* examined the effect of the professional chaplain meeting spiritual needs of these patients. The study showed spiritual care to be an important component in the recovery process for mental illness (Gomi, Starnino and Canda 2013). A recent study in the United Kingdom compared the effectiveness of primary care chaplaincy (PCC) to patients receiving antidepressants. The findings of the study suggest "primary care chaplaincy (and PCC alone) is associated with similar improvements in well-being to that of anti-depressants and certainly no worse. This seems to justify its use as a 'talk therapy' alternative to medication" (MacDonald 2017, 361).

A recent podcast on National Public Radio titled *This Ivy League Researcher Says Spirituality Is Good for Mental Health* interviewed Dr. Lisa Miller

of Columbia University. When relating spirituality as a source of resilience and its relationship to addiction Dr. Miller said, “The magnitude of the protective benefit of personal spirituality—simply my personal spirituality is highly important to me—is an 80% decreased relative risk for DSM diagnosis of addiction—addiction to drugs, addiction to alcohol.” Later in the interview Miller added a similar relationship between personal spirituality and an 82% reduction in suicide.

In the article *Spirituality in HIV+ Patient Care* (Utley and Wachholtz 2011) the authors highlight the central importance of addressing religious and spiritual needs of persons living with chronic illnesses such as HIV. Another study concluded that spirituality uniquely predicts health and well-being outcomes in those with HIV/AIDS. This would include improvement in life satisfaction, functional health status and health related quality of life (Pargament et al. 2004).

Extensive research has been conducted demonstrating the positive impact of spiritual care with cancer patients (National Cancer Institute, 2021). This would include improved quality of life outcomes in patients with advanced cancer when spiritual needs were met (Balboni et al. 2007). The study *Religious and Spiritual Support Among Advanced Cancer Patients and Associations with End-of-Life Treatment* continued to build on these findings is a multisite study of 343 patients with advanced cancer. The study revealed that patients who believed their spiritual needs had been attended to had quality of life scores at life’s end that were 28% greater than those who did not receive spiritual care (Balboni and Peteet 2017).



A report from the Nurses' Health Study titled followed the religious practices of more than 74,000 participants for sixteen years. The study reported that women who attended weekly religious services had a lower mortality rate compared to those who never attended religious services (Li et al. 2016).

Finally, independent studies have shown that there is a range from four to fourteen years greater life expectancy for persons who believe in God (Matthews-King 2018, Rey 2011). Volunteerism and involvement in social organizations accounted for less than a year in increased life longevity, much lower than found in persons who hold a belief in God (Matthews-King 2018).

All these evidenced-based studies have taken different ways of examining the effects of loneliness, meaning making and the correlation of physical and mental recovery, positive outcomes and even life longevity. Each of these studies adds to a growing understanding of the need for and importance of professional chaplains.

In summary, many studies, all dated between the year 2000 to today have repeatedly provided evidence-based research demonstrating a correlation between care provided by a professional chaplain and improved patient outcomes. This evidence-based research is giving increased credibility to the services provided by the professional chaplain. This evidence-based research is also spurring the growth of spiritual care departments and opportunities for professional chaplains.

## Challenges from Pluralism for Evangelicals and Professional Chaplaincy

The assumption of pluralism for a professional chaplain has created challenges for persons who reside in faith traditions that hold an absolute truth. This would include the Jewish believer who holds the absolute truth, “There is no God but Yahweh,” the Catholic believer who holds the absolute truth, “Salvation is known in and through the Church,” and the Islamic believer who holds the absolute truth in Mohammad and the teachings of the Koran. This is true as well for the evangelical Christian who holds the absolute truth, “Jesus Saves.” This is consistent with the World Council of Churches who holds the absolute truth, “Jesus Saves.” This is consistent with the World Council of Churches who proclaim that the Lord Jesus Christ is “God and Savior according to the Scriptures,” a foundational declaration of the body today (Karkkainen, ed. Green et al. 2018, 27).

In this paper and the handbook resource *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* a broad definition of Christian evangelism is used. It is recognized that there is a vast array of definitions within the Christian choir, the Body of Christ. However, the statement that proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Savior according to the Scriptures echoes the biblical research portion of this paper that examined Johannine literature and specifically I John where twice it is repeated that a confession of Christ is evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit (I John 4:2-3a and I John 4:15).

The Apostle Paul also echoes a similar thought concerning Christian unity within a common confession in Jesus Christ as evidence of the Spirit of God. Romans 10:9-10 reads, “because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved”.

Maintaining this broad definition of evangelism is consistent with the purpose of this project which was to create a handbook that would provide practical insights leading towards discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The project and handbook resource then seeks to validate the ministry of evangelical Christians in ministry as professional chaplains and provide tools to assist the evangelical Christian to both enter and successfully serve within their ministry as a professional chaplain.

#### Challenges for Evangelicals and Professional Chaplaincy

Pluralism is defined as “the existence or toleration in society of a number of different ethnic groups, cultures, and beliefs” (*Oxford American Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). The focus on pluralism has created challenges for those persons who maintain a faith perspective that holds an absolute truth. One example would be evangelical Christians. Michael Elmore conducted a review of evangelical professional chaplains and the challenges and difficulties experienced by many within their professional chaplaincy ministry. The result of these findings is reviewed in his dissertation “Discovering an Evangelical Theology of Chaplaincy”.

In his research, Elmore received responses from 180 evangelical professional chaplains. His findings discovered that approximately half of those responding reported feeling pressured to compromise beliefs (Elmore 2018, 128-129), and roughly sixty-six percent of 119 professional chaplains reported to have encountered bias against evangelical professional chaplains (Elmore 2018, 128-129). Finally, Elmore discovered that thirty-eight percent of the 180 evangelical professional chaplains who responded, or sixty-four professional chaplains believed their only option was to recuse themselves from providing spiritual care in their current setting and form of ministry (Elmore 2018, 125-126).

Challenges have also been experienced within the Church for evangelical Christians considering ministry as a professional chaplain. Bennett speaks of the need to “break outside the religious box and realizing that the mission field is not only in some foreign country but there is a mission field which includes chaplaincy within the community better known as the marketplace” (Bennett 2016, 4). For Bennett “serving as a chaplain requires training in how that ministry is a ‘ministry of presence’ which is where the chaplain represents Christ, not the Church” (Bennett 2016, 3).

A second challenge experienced within the church for evangelical Christians considering ministry as a professional chaplain, is the historic emphasis of proclamation of the Word sometimes to the detriment of representative ministry as a valid expression of ministry and even a form of evangelism. Watson cites Galli who echoes this challenge within the church to recognize representative ministry as equal to proclamation. Galli “bemoans

church leadership models which overemphasize the need for ‘prophetic and charismatic’ leaders that then inadvertently denigrates every clergyperson who is a chaplain- in hospitals, in the military (and sport) as if these ministers are second-class clergy” (Parker et al. 2016, 80).

Earlier in the Historical Research portion of this Project Thesis, I examined Aimee Semple McPherson as an individual who demonstrated the effectiveness of representative ministry as a form of evangelism. At this point, I would also like to view her as someone who maintained a powerful proclamation ministry and therefore embodies someone who blended both representative and proclamation forms of ministry.

#### Chaplain as Worship Representative and Leader

Experience has repeatedly taught that the professional chaplain has an unstated and unique role within the institutions they work. In their book *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo reflect upon chaplains as “designated leaders that create public spaces to hold, to alter perspectives, and to infuse meaning and purpose into the ordinary and everyday” (Cadage and Rambo 2022, 8). This is consistent with the Professional Competency: PRO1: “Promote the integration of pastoral/spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which one resides.”

This ministry of authentic presence has been discussed previously. However, due to their unique role within institutions the chaplain is also understood as someone who assists the community in “Meaning Making through

Ritual and Public Leadership” (Cadge and Rambo 2022, 10). Further expounding upon competency PRO1, Rochelle Robins and Danielle Tumminio Hansen speak into this characteristic of the chaplain describing the “chaplain as a representative of the sacred who can facilitate community and give voice to personal, communal, and systemic afflictions” (Cadge and Rambo 2022, 110).

The professional chaplain as worship representative and leader is found in the Pastoral Competencies: PAS8: “Develop, coordinate and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.” In some hospitals, public worship is required as in memorial services and overhead prayer heard throughout the hospital at designated times that is led by the chaplain. A memorial service that is inclusive to all faiths can be a powerful and healing experience. Reading a Bible passage like Psalm 23 which talks about God’s faithfulness in this life and the life to come is perfectly acceptable. Reading the passage from Hebrews 12:1 and stating in an authentic manner that “within my faith tradition” this passage informs me that this life is not the end opens others within the community to also draw upon the wisdom of their own faith tradition.

### Changing Tides

Several recent Supreme Court decisions have ruled in favor of religious liberties. These rulings include the 2014 case of *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* which ruled that private business cannot be forced to practice in ways which fall outside of their religious beliefs ([oyez.org/cases/2013/13-354](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2013/13-354)). The 2018 case *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* ruled that a private

citizen could not be forced to work and function in ways outside their personal religious conviction([oyez.org/cases/2017/16-111](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2017/16-111)). The 2020 case *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania* ([oyez.org/cases/2019/19-431](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2019/19-431)) and the 2021 case *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* ([oyez.org/cases/2020/19-123](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2020/19-123)) both upheld the rights of religiously founded institutions to act and function in ways consistent with their religious beliefs and values. The 2022 case *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* acknowledged an individual's right to prayer in a public setting and religious expression as guaranteed by the First Amendment ([oyez.org/cases/2021/21-418](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2021/21-418)). All these Supreme Court rulings defend and advocate for forms of authenticity in practice for those who hold and live by religious principles.

#### Implications for Professional Chaplaincy

In the past persons with strong religious convictions that hold an absolute truth, including the evangelical Christian, might believe that they would need to compromise their religious beliefs or that they might be denied the opportunity to serve as a professional chaplain because of their beliefs. Legally, this is no longer the case. Further, every board-certified professional chaplain must be endorsed by their denominational endorsing agency and cannot be required by their position as a professional chaplain to function in a manner outside the rules and regulations of the denomination of which they are a member. As a result, this project thesis and handbook are advocating and providing a resource to maneuver potential obstacles so the evangelical Christians can perform their ministry.

## Conclusion

Throughout this project thesis and within *A Handbook for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as Professional Chaplains* I have sought to demonstrate how God is using professional chaplains in a multi-cultural reality to reach the non-believers, the unchurched, and those who are not currently having their needs met by traditional forms of “church”. The project sought to describe the validity of the role of the evangelical in professional chaplaincy by focusing on three issues that arise as blessings of current debates within the church universal and requirements within the world of professional chaplaincy. First, requirements in the world of professional chaplaincy remind us that the world, not an individual church or denomination or even Christian believers, is our parish. The world is our parish. Second, a recommitment to serious thought and the implications of the Holy Trinity reminds us that God is beyond any human thought or theology. This allows God to be God and humans to be free to be authentically human. Third, recent debates and professional chaplaincy requirements move us to the gift of authenticity. Authenticity moves us to being defined not by what we are not but by who and what we are.

The movement from pluralism to authenticity opens new possibilities for any person or faith tradition that holds an understanding of an absolute truth. This includes a role for the evangelical Christian who might feel called to ministry as a professional chaplain. Authenticity means that evangelical chaplains do not need to compromise who they are or be denied the opportunity to serve as a professional chaplain.



Examining contemporary literature and realities demonstrates enormous growth in the profession of professional chaplaincy in a variety of areas. Recent Supreme Court rulings have consistently defended and advocated for forms of authenticity in practice for those who hold and live by religious principles.

As the twenty-first century reaches its third decade, God is creating a new mission field, and the various roles performed by professional chaplains is a way that God is using to share the good news of Jesus Christ to communities within the United States and throughout the world. A recent study conducted by Gallup for the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab at Brandeis University reported that “one in four Americans have interacted with a chaplain at some point in their lives” (Saad 2022). The article revealed that most people reported the interaction with the chaplain was valuable to them- forty-four percent called it very valuable, and thirty-two percent reported moderately valuable. Another, seventeen percent said the encounter was only a little valuable, while seven percent described it as not valuable at all (Saad 2022).

This Gallup study provides empirical evidence for what is intuitively known and experienced. Professional chaplains are often serving people from various faith perspectives, including people with no faith perspective. The chaplain encounter “often connects faith leaders with nonreligious people- constituting forty-two percent of those who have interacted with a chaplain” (Saad 2002). Taken together, it is evident that many times it is the professional chaplain in representative ministry who serve as the hands and feet of the Gospel. Further, since seventy-six percent of those served by a chaplain reported the encounter

to be very valuable or moderately valuable one can reasonably assume that many of these chaplain encounters occurred between the chaplain and nonreligious persons and often these encounters were experienced as either very valuable or moderately valuable.

Further, this project thesis has discussed the underrepresentation of evangelical Christians in the world of professional chaplaincy. Glenn T. Stanton cites a study conducted by the Indiana University/Harvard research in agreement with Pew's Greg Smith that says, "evangelicals are not in decline but actually grew from 1972 when they were eighteen percent of the population, to a steady level of about twenty eight percent from 1989 to 2016" (Stanton 2019, 17). This would suggest that one in four professional chaplains would be from evangelical Christian traditions. Personal experience as a BCCI certified chaplain working in the field for the past sixteen-plus years says this is nowhere near the reality within the profession.

The role of the evangelical chaplain in professional chaplaincy is challenging and demanding; however, working in God's vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) is always challenging and demanding. In this way, it is critical that the evangelical chaplain not concede any avenue within professional chaplaincy including those arenas that require BCCI accreditation due to challenges that may be experienced.

It is not legal to exclude the evangelical chaplain from ministry as a professional chaplain. Further, God is creating pathways to reach the unchurched in a multi-cultural society and professional chaplaincy is one of those

pathways. God will bless the work of the evangelical chaplain whose ministry resides in professional chaplaincy. Therefore, it is imperative evangelical Christians “show up” and do our part in God’s vineyard.

As part of this project, I wrote the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplaincy*. The next three chapters will describe the purpose and process that went into the writing of the handbook. It will then examine the effectiveness of the handbook in addressing the stated goals for the handbook.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESIGN, PROCEDURE, AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this project was to create a resource that would provide practical insights leading toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The reason for the handbook was my observation that God is working with evangelical Christians through professional chaplaincy to reach people, many times unchurched, within our multi-cultural reality. Second, was the experience of obstacles that are present within professional chaplaincy and within the local church for evangelical Christians considering ministry as professional chaplains. Third, the reality that evangelical Christians are vastly underrepresented in the profession of professional chaplaincy.

Michael Elmore, in the dissertation *Discovering an Evangelical Theology of Chaplaincy* noted that evangelical chaplains are in the minority (Elmore 2018, 105). Elmore's discovery reinforced the observation based on my years of experience that evangelical Christians are vastly underrepresented in the profession of professional chaplaincy. Lang echoes this observation writing, "While the statistics do not demonstrate that widespread, systematic discrimination is taking place, they are at least suggestive of that" (Lang 2010, 21).

In an effort to examine these obstacles and then develop a resource for evangelical Christians considering ministry as a professional chaplain, I wrote a

resource titled *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain*. The handbook consists of seven chapters with Spiritual Discernment Questions at the end of each chapter. The chapters are as follows:

1. A Blessing to the Nations and the implications of Professional Chaplaincy
2. Implications of Authenticity in Professional Chaplaincy: A Biblical Perspective
3. The Mystery of the Trinity and Forms of Unity
4. Paradigm Shifts in the World of Professional Chaplaincy and a Role for Evangelical Christian Chaplains
5. Living in the Mystery and Experiencing the Divine
6. Trailblazers: Interviews from Professional Chaplains
7. Professional Chaplain as Evangelist

Each chapter in the handbook addressed different aspects and challenges known in the three reasons articulated at the beginning of this chapter and how the evangelical Christian can respond to each of these challenges. Each chapter concluded with Spiritual Discernment Questions. These Spiritual Discernment Questions are meant to facilitate discernment for the evangelical Christian reader who may be considering ministry as a professional chaplain.

The purpose of the project thesis was to articulate biblical, theological, and historical foundations for the validity of professional chaplaincy. The project thesis then examined contemporary literature to examine shifts within the world of professional chaplaincy and growth that is occurring within the profession. The

handbook argued that the bridge for evangelical Christians into the world of professional chaplaincy is authenticity. Authenticity displayed by the professional chaplain in the ministry as a professional chaplain.

The project thesis and handbook argued for the need for evangelical Christians to not concede the profession of professional chaplaincy to those with faith paradigms. Rather the project thesis and handbook demonstrated ways to navigate challenges that might be encountered by the evangelical Christian so that they may effectively maneuver these challenges and serve God as evangelical Christians as they are called as professional chaplains.

### **Project Goals**

The purpose of this project was to create a handbook that will provide insights leading towards discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The resource question was: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

The project goals were:

1. The resource will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of chaplaincy.
2. The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC).
3. The resource will identify three challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community.

4. The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.
5. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principles of authenticity.
6. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.

### **Context**

My project was to create a resource that assists in discernment for evangelical Christians who may be considering ministry as a professional chaplain. The handbook I wrote *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* and this project thesis demonstrate how God is using professional chaplaincy in a multi-cultural reality to reach the unchurched and those who do not currently have their needs met by traditional forms of church.

Professional chaplaincy is a unique ministry. The ministry of the professional chaplaincy does not take place in the local church, rather, professional chaplaincy is a ministry that takes place outside of the church walls. Professional chaplaincy takes place in various settings in the world and where people live. This requires a unique form of training. Many institutions require the professional chaplain to be board certified. Many institutions require this board certification through BCC.

Board certified accreditation requires four units of clinical pastoral education (CPE) and a subsequent approval through a BCC process and

interview committee. Experience demonstrated and this project thesis has highlighted this process can be very difficult for anyone who has a faith perspective that holds an absolute truth, including the evangelical Christian.

The handbook is written to reveal how God is already creating an avenue through professional chaplaincy and to then assist an individual in maneuvering obstacles that occur within BCC and within the local church. In this way the handbook serves as a tool for discernment and a resource when encountering obstacles into the profession of chaplaincy.

The handbook and project thesis consistently advocated that the evangelical Christian not concede the profession of professional chaplaincy to other faith practices. Such a decision by evangelical Christians would be detrimental to the profession of professional chaplaincy and its stated goal. Such a decision would lessen the potential impact of professional chaplains as healers within the multi-cultural reality we live in, especially when considering evangelical Christians that live within our culture. A decision to concede the profession of professional chaplaincy would reduce the opportunity to represent Christ and share the healing and good news known in Jesus.

### **Participants**

The participants in this project were professional chaplains and professionals that serve as pastors in the local church. The participants included both male and female. The participants serve as professional chaplains in various settings. The participants came from various evangelical communities. These communities know unity in their proclamation that “Jesus Saves”. These



participants made up an expert panel of twelve professionals who reviewed the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain*.

The handbook and corresponding Likert survey with additional qualitative questions were sent to twenty professionals. Twelve professionals read the handbook and returned the Likert survey which contained eighteen quantitative questions and six qualitative questions.

All professional respondents are active in their field of ministry. Five of the professional respondents serve in the local church setting, four of the professional respondents serve as professional chaplains and three of the professional respondents have served in both the local church setting and are now working in a professional chaplaincy capacity. Finally, two of the professional chaplains have served in both the hospital and military.

The length of ministry ranged from four years to twenty-four years of service. There were six males, five females and one who cared not to respond. The religious Affiliation included the Wesleyan church, Church of Christ, Southern Baptist, three Global Methodists, Anglican, non-denominational Pentecostal and three from the United Methodist Church.

### **Design**

The purpose of this project was to create a handbook that would provide practical insights leading toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The research question was: In what ways

did the handbook provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

A Likert scale survey was developed. The Likert survey consisted of eighteen quantitative questions followed by six corresponding qualitative questions. The purpose of the Likert survey was to examine the effectiveness of the manual *A Handbook for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain*. The goal of the review of the manual was to determine if the handbook effectively serves as a tool for discernment and an effective guide for navigating obstacles for evangelical Christians who are considering ministry as a professional chaplain.

A letter of introduction (Appendix II), the handbook and Likert scale survey with corresponding qualitative questions was emailed to twenty professionals. These twenty professionals were currently working in the field of the local church ministry, professional chaplaincy or have worked and are currently working in both the local church and professional ministry settings.

Twelve professionals emailed the Likert scale survey with corresponding questions back and these were printed and placed in a folder. These twelve professionals formed a panel who evaluated the handbook for clarity, relevance, and application.

These professionals analyzed if the handbook gave a realistic picture of ministry as a professional chaplain, effectively identified challenges in both the world of professional chaplaincy and within the church for evangelicals considering ministry as a professional chaplain, provided practical insights for

navigating these obstacles to then enter and serve successfully in ministry as a professional chaplain, and finally evaluated if the handbook is a valuable tool for discernment.

Participation was voluntary, and assessments were anonymous. Participants were given an assessment tool and eight weeks to evaluate the handbook, and then asked to complete an anonymous online assessment. A six-point Likert scale was used to measure to what extent the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* provided practical insights that lead toward discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

### **Procedure**

The manual *A Handbook for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* was written. After discussion with Dr. Dawn Morton Ed.D., Director of Advanced Degree Programs and Assessment at Ashland Theological Seminary it was decided that feedback from professional chaplains and those currently serving in the local church would broaden the applicable information received by professional respondents. This decision proved to be beneficial when analyzing responses for goal #3: The resource will identify challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community.

A Likert survey with corresponding qualitative questions was created. This was then sent to twenty professional respondents. Twelve professional respondents returned the Likert survey with corresponding qualitative questions.

### **Assessment**

A six-point Likert scale and corresponding qualitative questions were utilized in this project. The Likert scale with corresponding qualitative questions and the handbook were sent to twenty professional respondents. Twelve professional respondents returned the Likert scale and corresponding qualitative questions. After receiving the Likert survey and qualitative question the results were studied and evaluated to determine respondent's feedback.

Professional respondents emailed the Likert scale and corresponding questions back to me. These were then printed and placed in a folder. During my annual spiritual retreat, I analyzed the data.

First, using a notebook I recorded the results of each respondent and each of the eighteen quantitative questions. These quantitative questions were then grouped within the appropriate project goal. The results of this research demonstrated three different groupings of respondents concerning the effectiveness of the handbook.

After analyzing the data, it became clear that the handbook effectively met each of the project goals as the composite score for each goal scored in-between the moderately and strongly agreed range. After examining the dissertation from Jennifer Mei Lin Lam, I determined the wisdom of following her example and including a Composite Score for All Goals table.

I analyzed the responses to the quantitative questions a second time. The second time, I only looked to see how many professional respondents scored a six. This is the highest rating on the Likert scale and means the respondent strongly agreed with the quantitative question. The results showed that each of the quantitative questions had respondents that scored six. The results showed that between three and eight professional respondents scored each quantitative question at a six, meaning strongly agreed.

When analyzing the open-ended qualitative questions, I grouped responses that noted similar responses to each open-ended qualitative question. After discussion with my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Elmore, I was encouraged to expand beyond interpreting the open-ended questions based solely on the responses given by most professional respondents. This approach bore fruit, especially when analyzing a negative response to the open-ended question, “Share a challenge concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the evangelical community and how the resource addressed this challenge.” A detailed analysis of both the quantitative and open-ended qualitative questions can be found in the next chapter of this project thesis.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REPORTING THE RESULTS

The purpose of the project was to create a handbook that would provide practical insights leading towards discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. Twelve professionals returned a Likert survey with qualitative questions after reading the handbook *A Handbook of Discernment or Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain*.

Each respondent completed the Likert survey with qualitative questions. A six-point Likert scale was used for the survey response: (6) Strongly Agree; (5) Moderately Agree; (4) Slightly Agree; (3) Slightly Disagree; (2) Moderately Disagree; (1) Strongly Disagree. Each respondent then answered a corresponding qualitative question for each of the six goals being used to examine the effectiveness of the handbook in assisting evangelical Christians in discernment of professional chaplaincy.

#### **Goal Five: Value of Authenticity**

Goal five scored the highest of the six goals examined. Goal five was: "The resource provided examples of the value of authenticity by th Evangelical Christian to assist professional chaplaincy to live into its stated vision more fully." The composite score for this goal was 5.47. The quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (3) The resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians functioning as professional chaplains based on authenticity. (10) The

resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity. (18) The resource provided examples of the value of authenticity by the Evangelical Christian to assist professional chaplaincy to live into its own stated vision more fully.

Table One: Goal #5: Value of Authenticity

Question	Average	Responses
3. The resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians functioning as professional chaplains based on authenticity.	5.58	12
18. The resource provided examples of the value of authenticity by the Evangelical Christian to assist professional chaplaincy to live into its own stated vision more fully.	5.58	12
10. The resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity.	5.25	12
Composite Score	5.47	12

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree.

The survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal five question #3 at six. This means seven of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score for responses to question #3 was 5.58.

The survey discovered eight of twelve respondents scored goal five question #18 at six. This means eight of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to responses to question #18 was 5.58.

The survey discovered six of twelve respondents scored goal 5 question #10 at six. This means six of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score for responses to question #10 was 5.25.

Finally, the survey discovered question #3 and #18 scored the highest of any of the eighteen quantitative questions. Both scores were 5.58.

#### **Goal Four: Case Studies**

This goal scored the second highest of the six goals examined. The composite score for this goal was 5.46. Goal four was: "The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment." The quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (4) The resource provided case studies that demonstrated times of healing. (7) The resource provided case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment. (12) The resource provided case studies that demonstrated some of the challenges that occur within professional chaplaincy.



Table Two: Goal #4: Case Studies

Question	Average	Responses
12. The resource provided case studies that demonstrated some of the challenges that occur within professional chaplaincy.	5.54	11
4. The resource provided case studies that demonstrated times of healing.	5.50	12
7. The resource provided case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment. *One respondent did not answer question #12.	5.33	12
Composite Score	5.46	

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree  
4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree.

The survey discovered seven of eleven respondents scored goal four question #12 at six. This means seven of eleven respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to responses for question #12 was 5.54.

The survey discovered six of twelve respondents scored goal four question #4 at six. This means six of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to responses for question #4 was 5.50.

The survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal four question #7 at six. This means seven of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to responses for question #7 was 5.33.

The survey demonstrated that goal #4 and goal #5 scored the highest. This indicates the respondents scored that these two goals were most effectively addressed within the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as Professional Chaplains*.

Three goals rated in a similar range between the two highest scored goals and the lowest rated goal. These three goals included goal #6, goal 1, and goal #2.

### **Goal Six: Tools for Consideration of Chaplaincy**

This goal scored the third highest of the six goals examined. The composite score for this goal was 5.31. Goal 6 was, "The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity." The quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (2) The resource provided vignettes as a tool of unity within diversity in practice by a professional chaplain. (11) The resource provided imagery of the Trinity as a tool for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity with diversity. (17) The resource provided a theological framework as a tool for the benefit of unity within diversity represented by the Evangelical Christian for the profession of professional chaplaincy.

Table 3: Goal #6: Tools for Consideration of Chaplaincy

Question	Average	Responses
2. The resource provided vignettes as a tool of unity within diversity in practice by a professional chaplain.	5.42	12
11. The resource provided imagery of the Trinity as a tool for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.	5.25	12
17. The resource provided a theological framework as a tool for the benefit of unity within diversity represented by the Evangelical Christian for the profession of professional chaplaincy.	5.25	12
Composite Score	5.31	12

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree

The survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal six question #2 at six. This means seven of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to question #2 was 5.42.

The survey discovered six of twelve respondents scored goal six question #11 at six. This means six of twelve respondents strongly agree with this question. The average score to question #11 was 5.25.

Th survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal six question #17 at six. This means seven of twelve respondents strongly agree to the question. The average score to question #17 was 5.25.

### **Goal One: Chaplaincy in a Multi-Cultural Society**

This goal scored the fourth highest of the six goals examined. The composite score for goal one was 5.28. Goal one was, "The research will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy." This means the professional respondents scored the goal at moderately agree.

The three quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (1) The resource identified an understanding of how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy. (9) The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who served people from faith traditions that were not Christian through professional chaplaincy. (13) The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have ministered to Christians who are currently unchurched.

Table 4: Goal #1: Chaplaincy in a Multi-Cultural Society

Question	Average	Responses
9. The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have served people from faith traditions that are not Christian through professional chaplaincy.	5.42	12
1. The resource identified an understanding of how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through professional chaplaincy.	5.33	12
13. The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have ministered to Christians who are currently unchurched.	5.08	12
Composite Score	5.28	12

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree

The survey discovered eight of twelve respondents scored goal one question #9 at six. This means eight of twelve respondents strongly agree to the question. The average score to question #9 was 5.42.

The survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal one question #1 at six. This means seven of twelve respondents strongly agree to the question. The average score to question #1 was 5.33.

The survey discovered four of twelve respondents scored goal one question #13 at six. This means four of twelve respondents strongly agree with the question. The average score to question #13 was 5.08.

## **Goal Two: Obstacles to Chaplaincy for Evangelicals**

This goal scored the fifth highest of the six goals examined. The composite score for this goal was 5.22. This means the professional respondents scored this goal: “The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC) at “moderately agree”.

The quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (5) The resource identified the obstacle of pluralism for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains. (8) The resource identified the obstacle of the incompatibility of proselytization within professional chaplaincy. (15) The resource identified the obstacle of practice from ministry to one’s parish to understanding the scope of practice is all people.

Table Five: Goal #2: Obstacles to Chaplaincy for Evangelicals

Question	Average	Responses
5. The resource identified the obstacle of pluralism for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains.	5.42	12
8. The resource identified the obstacle of the incompatibility of proselytization within professional chaplaincy.	5.17	12
15. The resource identified the obstacle of scope of practice from ministry to one's parish to understanding the scope of practice is all people.	5.08	12
Composite Score	5.22	12

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree.

The survey discovered seven of twelve respondents scored goal two question #5 at six. This means that seven of twelve respondents strongly agree with the question. The average score to question #5 was 5.42.

The survey discovered five of twelve respondents scored goal two question #8 at six. This means five of twelve respondents strongly agree with the question. The average score to question #8 was 5.17.

The survey discovered five of twelve respondents scored goal two question #15 at six. This means five of twelve respondents strongly agree to the question. The average score to question #15 was 5.22.

The resource indicates respondents moderately agreed that the handbook resource identified goal six: The resource will provide tools for Evangelical

Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity with diversity; goal one: The research will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy, and goal two: The resource will identify obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC) at moderately agree. The goals scored 5.31, 5.28 and 5.22. This means the respondents indicated the handbook was moderately successful with these goals.

### **Goal Three: Challenges within the Evangelical Community**

This goal scored the sixth highest of the six goals examined. The composite score for this goal was 5.00. Goal three was, "The resource will identify challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical community." The quantitative questions applicable to this goal were: (6) The resource identified the challenge of keeping a biblical framework that speaks into the validity of professional chaplaincy. (14) The resource identified the challenge of using historical examples demonstrating the validity of representative ministry as a form of evangelism. (16) The resource identified the challenge within the church of primacy of proclamation of the Word with the balance of representative ministry as a valid form of evangelism.



Table 6: Goal #3: Challenges Within the Evangelical Community

Question	Average	Responses
6. The resource identified the challenge of keeping a biblical framework that speaks into the validity of professional chaplaincy.	5.42	12
16. The resource identified the challenge within the church of primacy of proclamation of the Word with the balance of representative ministry as a valid for of evangelism.	4.83	12
14. The resource identified the challenge of using historical examples demonstrating the validity of representative ministry as a valid form of evangelism.	4.75	12
Composite Score	5.00	12

Likert Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= moderately agree; 6= strongly agree.

The survey discovered six of twelve respondents scored goal three question #6 at six. This means six of twelve respondents strongly agree to the question. The average score to question #6 was 5.42.

The survey discovered four of twelve respondents scored goal three question #16 at six. This means four of twelve respondents strongly agree with the question. The average score to question #16 was 4.83.

The survey discovered three of twelve respondents scored goal three question #14 at six. This means three of twelve respondents strongly agree with the question. The average score to question #14 was 4.75.

Goal Three: The resource will identify challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community scored significantly lower than any other goal. When analyzing the results for goal three

among those professional respondents serving solely in the local church setting the score drops to 4.8.

### **Composite Scores for All Six Goals**

Based on the analysis of the professional respondents, the Likert survey discovered the extent to which respondents believed the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelical Christians Considering Professional Chaplaincy* serves as an effective tool for discernment and navigating obstacles for the Evangelical Christian to enter the profession of professional chaplaincy. Each of the assessment questions had respondents who strongly agreed. This ranged between three and eight respondents who strongly agreed to various assessment questions. The average total score for the eighteen assessment questions was 5.29 (Table 7).

Table 7: Composite Scores for All Goals

Goal No.	Name	Average
5	Value of Authenticity	5.47
4	Case Studies	5.46
6	Tools for Consideration of Chaplaincy	5.31
1	Chaplaincy in a multi-Cultural Society	5.28
2	Obstacles to Chaplaincy for Evangelicals	5.22
3	Challenges Within the Evangelical Community	5.00
Average Composite Score		5.29

Examining the average scores indicates that each stated goal scored somewhere in the moderately agree range. This meant respondents moderately agreed that the handbook effectively addressed each of the stated goals. The effectiveness of the handbook will be further explored by examining respondent's responses to corresponding qualitative questions.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Each respondent received six open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Each of these questions corresponded to one of the six research goals. The aim of these open-ended questions was to determine if the manual *A Handbook for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* is an effective tool for discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy.

The first open-question-ended question asked, “Share the best one or two ways the resource identified how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multicultural society through professional chaplaincy”. Three respondents noted the importance of having a professional chaplain from an Evangelical Christian foundation to serve the needs of evangelical patients. Two respondents noted the use of authenticity by the professional chaplain. One of these respondents wrote, “For Evangelical Christians, chaplaincy can become a vehicle for “authentic” (which can mean many things depending upon one’s perspective) and representational presence in times of need”.

Five respondents noted examples of the professional chaplain serving the unchurched or persons who hold a faith tradition that is not Christian. One of these respondents wrote,

The resource identified chaplains as an important resource in the community for a largely unchurched population. There are some who will only be introduced to spiritual discussions through their encounters with chaplains in these spaces and chaplains are unique in that they go to the people rather than waiting for the people to come to them.

The respondent’s responses to the qualitative question indicates the handbook effectively communicated the importance of authenticity by the professional chaplain, the reality that the professional chaplain often serves the unchurched and the need for evangelical Christians to serve the needs of evangelical Christians. The respondent’s comments to the qualitative question, “Share the best one or two ways the resource identified how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy” demonstrated that the handbook resource effectively reflects the mission field for the professional chaplain is the world and not limited to one’s parish of fellow

believers.

The second open-ended question asked, “Share an obstacle for Evangelical Christians to become a Board-Certified Chaplain and how the resource addressed the obstacle.” Five respondents noted the obstacle of pluralism. One respondent responded, “Religious prejudice, bias and paternalism”.

Respondents provided different ways the handbook addressed obstacles for evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC). Six respondents used the word authentic or authenticity of the chaplain in their response. One of these respondents wrote, “The paper highlights how a chaplain can be authentic and still respect other religious viewpoints which allow for empathy and supportive presence”.

Another respondent captured the essence of the handbook and how to address obstacles for evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains. This respondent wrote.

Boards encourage a broad perspective and acceptance of diverse views as they certify chaplains. For those who have a perspective of their faith tenants being “absolute truth”. if they don’t learn how to be present fully to where people are and instead, hope to proselytize, they won’t be accepted. The solution is to be authentic and affirm representational presence.

Six of the respondents addressed obstacles for evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC) by noting the value of presence, representation, or incarnational aspects of the professional chaplain.

Respondents focused on the challenge of pluralism and bias for the evangelical Christian when entering professional chaplaincy. Respondents echoed tools for navigating these obstacles that were provided within the handbook. Six respondents noted authenticity in the professional chaplain and six respondents discussed different aspects of representative ministry known in the ministry of presence.

The third open-ended question asked, “Share a challenge concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical community and how the resource addressed this challenge”. Four respondents noted the expansion of God’s love. One of the respondents wrote, “The resource consistently reframed the chaplain’s role as having the responsibility to expand the love of God”. Another respondent reflected upon the importance of the professional chaplain “seeing the world as their parish and not an individual church as their parish. Having a broad view that looks beyond the walls of the local church”.

Four respondents noted the challenge of proselytization and answered this challenge with authenticity, presence and “gracious hospitality”. One respondent noted the importance of moving from dualistic to Trinitarian thinking. One respondent captured the spirit of not conceding the profession of professional chaplaincy, noting the evangelical professional chaplain as “power brokers” within organizations like BCC and APC. Finally, another respondent answered, “working as an evangelical in a non-proselytizing pluralistic environment is actually strengthened through strong faith (true to self) while respecting the faith journey of another”.

One respondent wrote negatively of the handbook on this question. This respondent wrote,

A challenge seen is the idea of what an absolute truth is for various traditions. The writer appeared to claim the absolute truth of a faith tradition was limited by the writer's understanding. This negates an important commonality of each tradition that allows for fruitful engagement and ministry. Each tradition has at its core a belief in a Creator/God that shares similar attributes across traditions. That would be a greater "absolute truth" than doctrinal claims.

This respondent provides a pluralistic viewpoint. This project thesis and corresponding handbook makes the case for authenticity by the evangelical Christian in personhood and ministry practice. For the evangelical Christian Jesus is the reason for what we do in ministry as professional chaplains and how we perform the ministry of professional chaplaincy.

The fourth open-ended question asked, "In your reading of the handbook what case study demonstrated the validity of ministry of professional chaplaincy and why?" Respondents remarked on seven different case study vignettes that were provided in the handbook. One of these respondents referred to a case study that highlighted the mystery and awe that occurred with a family member at the moment of his mother's death. The respondent noted how "the chaplain can assist them in making meaning of it all".

Another respondent noted the scope of practice for the professional chaplain. This respondent wrote, "I am struck by the reality that the author ministers primarily to the 'unchurched' or those of other faiths, rather than the people within the church- which is the clientele with whom most clergy typically engage".

A further respondent wrote, “Each case study demonstrated different aspects of the validity of the ministry of professional chaplaincy”. Another respondent wrote, “The handbook is replete with many stories that demonstrate the importance of professional chaplaincy. These examples are so on point they allow the reader to think of settings for chaplaincy beyond the healthcare/hospital setting”. One respondent commented on Ananias as the archetypal figure for professional chaplaincy and the seven characteristics of professional chaplaincy.

Responses demonstrated the effectiveness of case studies and vignettes and the ability for respondents to visualize the work of the professional chaplain. In this way, the case studies and vignettes also serve as a valuable tool for an evangelical Christian who might be considering ministry as a professional chaplain.

The fifth open-ended question asked, “in what ways did the handbook demonstrate authenticity in practice by the professional chaplain.” Six respondents noted authenticity as the tool for being an effective professional chaplain. One noted the need for authenticity to journey through the “dark shadows of life”.

Five respondents referred to case studies and vignettes that illustrated authenticity in practice by the professional chaplain. Two different case study vignettes were referenced. Three respondents noted the case study where there was a need for a chaplain who prayed in tongues to best serve the need of a patient. One of these respondents referred to an encounter where a Hindu woman was served by the chaplain. Another respondent noted the many



vignettes and case studies. This respondent wrote, “This is the overall strength of the paper. Stories and vignettes, with biblical and theological construct made the case strongly for authenticity”.

Qualitative responses indicate the effectiveness of the handbook in articulating authenticity as the bridge for the evangelical Christian into the profession of professional chaplaincy. Responses also indicated the importance of authenticity in practice by the professional chaplain which is a main theme in the handbook.

The sixth open-ended question asked, “In what ways does the Evangelical Christian taking their place within the profession of professional chaplaincy serve as a benefit to the profession of professional chaplaincy?” Five respondents noted the need for professional evangelical chaplains to then meet the needs of more conservative Christians within our population.

Four respondents noted traits known in the Christian faith that are embodied by evangelical Christians. One respondent highlighted the need for evangelical Christians to be present as salt and light. One of these four respondents wrote of the need to “allow the fruits of the Spirit to shine through without evangelizing”. Two of these respondents highlighted the “unique perspectives” of evangelical Christians that would not be present if evangelical Christians were not present. Another respondent wrote, “Evangelicals bring the blessing of grace and hope unique from any other faith tradition”. Finally, another respondent noted the need for evangelical Christians to stay firm in their faith.

In conclusion, respondents echoed the handbook in affirming the unique gifts brought by the evangelical Christian to professional chaplaincy. These unique gifts would not be present if the evangelical Christian concedes the profession of Board Certified (BCCI) professional chaplaincy.

### **Conclusion**

The data revealed that each of the goals scored somewhere between moderately to strongly agree. The Likert study results demonstrated the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* successfully met the goal of being a valuable tool for discernment for evangelical Christians who may be considering a call into ministry as a professional chaplain. The six open-ended qualitative questions reinforced that the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* successfully met the goal of being a valuable resource for discernment for evangelical Christians who may be considering a call to ministry as a professional chaplain.

One professional respondent responded to the qualitative question: Share the best one or two ways the resource identified how God is using evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy. The professional respondent wrote,

The resource aptly contends, and I agree that Evangelical Christians who are professional chaplains (of which I am included) are a representative presence of Christ's unity and love no matter who the person is. When one meets the patient with understanding, dignity, respect, and a compassionate presence the sharing of hope within a diverse world

begins to unfold. We do not have to be everything to everyone- we simply need to recognize the humanness and vulnerability we all share and lead with love in our sacred interaction with others.

Further, the handbook argued that authenticity is the bridge that can be taken for evangelical Christians to then be able to successfully navigate the challenges toward entry into the profession of professional chaplaincy and then successfully participate and minister within the ministry of Board-Certified chaplaincy. The goal that scored the highest within the six goals examined with the Likert survey is the goal: The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity.

In summary, the Likert survey with corresponding qualitative questions consistently demonstrated that the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelical Christians Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* would serve as a valuable resource for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. Further, responses indicate that the handbook effectively gave tools for discernment primarily found in case studies and vignettes. Finally, responses reflect that the handbook successfully articulates authenticity as the bridge for Evangelical Christians into the profession of professional chaplaincy.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

My journey at Ashland Theological Seminary began in January 2021 with the desire to explore three thoughts. First, at the time I had worked thirteen-plus years as a chaplain. I became a Board-Certified Chaplain (BCC) in 2015. This experience led me to three thoughts; 1) God is doing something to reach people, including the unchurched, in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of professional chaplaincy; 2) There seemed to be obstacles for Evangelical Christians and all persons who held an absolute truth; 3) Evangelical Christians are vastly under-represented in the profession of professional chaplaincy.

Experience indicated that there seemed to be three obstacles for entry into the profession of professional chaplaincy that occurred within BCC training and subsequent candidacy; 1) The challenge of pluralism; 2) The challenge of scope of practice for the professional chaplain which now moved to all people (the world) instead of the pastoral conception of one's parish or fellow believers; 3) The challenge of proselytization which is strictly forbidden in the profession of professional chaplaincy.

Experience also indicated the need to make the case for the validity of professional evangelical Christians serving as professional chaplains. This was done by addressing three challenges experienced within the church; 1) Validate the ministry of professional chaplaincy biblically; 2) Examine the need to shift

from proclamation to representative ministry; 3) Analyze what Evangelical Christians offer that uniquely adds to the profession of professional chaplaincy.

These past three years at Ashland Theological Seminary I have remained very focused on exploring the reasons I came to this seminary. Ashland Theological Seminary has given me an amazing opportunity and incredible freedom to explore these thoughts and observations. The project thesis and the manual *A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain* is meant to be used for discernment, teach the art of chaplaincy, and provide a resource for others to use in the teaching of professional chaplaincy. The goal is more Evangelical Christians who see professional chaplaincy as a valid expression of their ministry.

Ultimately, the project thesis and handbook have demonstrated my initial thoughts and observations to be true. God is doing something to reach people, including the unchurched, in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of professional chaplaincy. It is then imperative for evangelical Christians not to concede the profession of professional chaplaincy. Rather, evangelical Christians need to get into the “sandbox” that is professional chaplaincy. The project thesis and handbook advocated that the “bridge” into entry into the profession is authenticity. Then once in the sandbox of professional chaplaincy, evangelical Christians can validate their presence through authenticity and personhood. Finally, by showing up evangelical Christians serving as professional chaplains can continue to do their part in ushering in the kingdom of God in our day.

## Project Goals

The purpose of the project was to create a resource that would provide insights leading towards discernment for evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The six project goals were:

1. The resource will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of chaplaincy.
2. The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC).
3. The resource will analyze three challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community.
4. The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.
5. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principles of authenticity.
6. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.

On a six-point Likert scale survey each goal scored in the moderately to strongly agree range. This range was 5.00 to 5.47. The composite score for all goals, as found on table seven, was 5.29. I will analyze each goal starting with the most prominent goal and work in descending order.

### Goal Number Five: Value of Authenticity

Goal number five scored 5.47. The goal was: “The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity.” The three quantitative questions applied to this goal were: “The resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians functioning as professional chaplains based on authenticity” (#3). “The resource provided examples for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity” (#10). “The resource provided examples of the value of authenticity by the Evangelical Christian to assist professional chaplaincy to live into its stated vision more fully” (#18).

Chapter two examined the value of authenticity with a discussion on the Trinity. Irwin L. Ince Jr. provided a concluding thought and image, “For humanity to be the image of God, it must embody beautiful community-unity within diversity, diversity within unity” (Ince 2020, 55). A shift in thought within the world of professional chaplaincy from pluralism to authenticity was continued in chapter three examining the article by Zucker, Bradley and Tucker, The Chaplain as an Authentic and Ethical Presence.

The qualitative question for goal five was: In what ways did the handbook demonstrate authenticity in practice by the professional chaplain? One professional respondent noted the importance of having a staff member who was able to pray in tongues. In one of the examples provided in the handbook I shared an encounter with a patient who adamantly needed to pray in tongues before being extubated from a breathing machine, and my corresponding ability to reach out to a staff member who was then able to meet her need.

Another professional respondent wrote,

The resource provided a framework for Evangelical Christians to utilize Biblical models in their ministry. While Evangelicals may not impose their convictions on others, their ministry may be fueled or informed by their Biblical convictions and personal revelations from the Holy Spirit. This gives space for Evangelicals in their ministry, in that they are fulfilling what God called them to do despite working in an interfaith setting.

These results indicate that one of the core ideas of authenticity serving as a bridge into the profession of professional chaplaincy for the Evangelical Christian seemed to be effectively communicated.

#### Goal Four: Case Studies for Discernment

Goal four scored 5.46. Goal four was: “The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.” The quantitative questions applied to this goal were: “The resource provided case studies that demonstrated times of healing” (#4). “The resource provided case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment” (#7). “The resource provided case studies that demonstrated some of the challenges that occur within professional chaplaincy” (#12).

The qualitative question for goal four was: In your reading of the handbook what case study demonstrated the validity of the ministry of professional chaplaincy and why? Analyzing the qualitative responses, discovered many different case studies were mentioned. In total, seven different case studies were referenced by the twelve professional respondents. This suggests we are all individuals and therefore are drawn to unique aspects of the Divine.

One professional respondent answered, “Each case study demonstrated different aspects of the validity of the ministry of professional chaplaincy.



People's stories are told, whose lives are opened, changed, even healed because of the chaplain's presence".

This qualitative response indicated that using several case studies was beneficial. Further, this goal scored second of the six. The word "discernment" is in the name of the title of the handbook. This means it was an extremely important goal. A goal of the handbook was for the reader to have a good feel for the actual work of the professional chaplain at the bedside in all its complexities, challenges, and awe-inspiring moments.

#### Goal Six: Tools for Consideration of Chaplaincy

Goal six scored 5.31. Goal six was: "The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity." The quantitative questions applied to this goal were: "The resource provided vignettes as a tool of unity within diversity in practice by a professional chaplain" (#2). "The resource provided the imagery of the Trinity as a tool for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity" (#11). "The resource provided a theological framework as a tool for the benefit of unity within diversity represented by the Evangelical Christian for the purpose of professional chaplaincy" (#17).

Within the theological research Janos D. Pasztor suggested the centrality of Trinitarian theology as a tool for unity within diversity. Pasztor wrote, "It is Trinitarian theology that gives us the tools for critical examination of the ideas and practices of the church and its mission, past and present" (Brueggemann 2001, 46). The Trinity and the use of authenticity in practice and personhood are

the tools revealed in the project thesis for entry of the evangelical Christian into the profession of professional chaplaincy.

The qualitative question for goal six was: In what ways does the Evangelical Christian taking their place within the profession of professional chaplaincy serve as a benefit to the profession of professional chaplaincy? Seven professional respondents suggested the need for Evangelical chaplains to adequately serve the needs of evangelical patients. One respondent wrote, “Evangelicals bring the blessing of grace and hope unique from other faith traditions. Without Evangelical Christians serving in chaplaincy, a very large percentage of the in- patient population would not be represented”.

One professional respondent seemed to capture the idea of how evangelical Christians serving as professional chaplains can enhance the profession of professional chaplaincy to live more fully into its own stated vision. This professional respondent wrote,

First of all, there is an entire segment of the population that would not be represented in professions such as professional chaplaincy were to omit Evangelical Christians from the roster. Although some might prefer not to engage Evangelicals, they are a part of American culture and certainly deserve to have their spiritual needs respected and met the same way any population does. A culture of diversity and tolerance ceases to be diverse and tolerate if we lop off all that we might consider to be Evangelical.

In conclusion, responses reflected the need for evangelical Christian professional chaplains to then meet the needs of evangelical Christians. Further, responses noted that without evangelical Christian professional chaplains’ unique

gifts embodied by evangelical Christians would be absent. This point was made in the handbook; therefore, the handbook effectively addressed this issue.

#### Goal One: Chaplaincy in a Multi-Cultural Society

Goal one scored 5.28. Goal one was: “The resource will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of chaplaincy.” The quantitative questions applied for this goal were: “The resource identified an understanding of how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multicultural reality through professional chaplaincy” (#1). “The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have served people from faith traditions that are not Christian through professional chaplaincy” (#9). “The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have ministered to Christians who are currently unchurched” (#13).

Within the biblical research portion of this project thesis, I examined James McPolin and Donald Senior who wrote about God’s universal salvific intent as understood within Johannine literature now understood through the experience of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. A firm understanding of the value of each person serves the professional chaplain who is called to serve all people within our multicultural reality.

The qualitative question for goal one was: Share the one or two best ways the resource identified how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy. Three respondents referred to a case study involving a Hindu woman, another noted that the chaplain is “typically

accepted at a time of crisis regardless of culture or faith”. Another respondent wrote,

The resource identified chaplains as an important resource in the community for a largely unchurched population. There are some who will only be introduced to spiritual discussions through their encounters with chaplains in these spaces and chaplains are unique in that they go to the people rather than waiting for the people to come to them.

Responses for this goal indicated that the handbook and the vignettes found in the handbook effectively illustrated ways the professional chaplain in a multi-cultural reality can serve persons from different faith perspectives and those in the community that are unchurched.

#### Goal Two: Obstacles to Chaplaincy for Evangelicals

Goal two scored 5.22. Goal two was: “The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC). the quantitative questions for goal two were: “The resource identified the obstacle of pluralism for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains” (#5). “The resource identified the obstacle of the incompatibility of proselytization within professional chaplaincy” (#8). “The resource identified the obstacle of the scope of practice from ministry to one’s parish to understanding the scope of practice is all people” (#15).

An examination of stages theories focusing on Fowler discussed the struggle pluralism has with the inclusion of those who hold an absolute truth, including the evangelical Christian chaplain. Earlier in chapter two Marianne Meyre Thompson provided insight into Irenaeus and the value of Trinitarian thinking when confronting dualistic Gnostic thinking in his day and providing a

different image of community based on the co-equality found in the Trinity.

The qualitative question for goal two was: Share an obstacle for Evangelical Christians to become a Board-Certified Chaplain and how the resource addressed this obstacle. Analyzing responses to his question revealed nine of the respondents addressed how to navigate obstacles to become board certified chaplains. Six respondents used the word authentic or authenticity in their response and three respondents spoke of the value of presence, representation, or incarnational nature of professional chaplaincy. These respondents used insights from the handbook in addressing these challenges.

One respondent wrote,

An obstacle to board certification for an Evangelical Christian is often their convictions and orthodox Christian's beliefs. The resource addressed this in introducing a paradigm shift from pluralism being a requirement for Chaplains to authenticity in practice being highly valued for a successful chaplain. The resource's breakdown of this idea would help for the potential Evangelical chaplain to see a path to chaplaincy that did not make them feel like they would be asked to compromise in the future.

Analyzing responses, the handbook effectively addressed obstacles into the profession of professional chaplaincy for the evangelical Christian.

Responses reflected the effectiveness of the handbook and the idea that authenticity is the bridge into the profession of chaplaincy for the evangelical Christian.

### Goal Three: Challenges within the Evangelical Community

Goal three scored 5.00. Goal three was: "The resource will identify three challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the

Evangelical Christian community.” The quantitative questions for goal three were: “The resource identified the challenge of keeping a biblical framework that speaks into the validity of professional chaplaincy” (#6). “The resource identified the challenge of using historical examples demonstrating the validity of representative ministry as a form of evangelism” (#14). “The resource identified the challenge within the church of primacy of proclamation of the Word with the balance of representative ministry as a valid form of evangelism” (#16).

Three historical persons were examined to demonstrate the validity and effectiveness of representative ministry. St. Francis of Assisi, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Mother Teresa each provided witness to the potential of representative ministry as a tool for evangelism in their day. Later, in this chapter I will explore Ananias as the archetypal figure for professional chaplaincy.

The qualitative question for goal three was: Share a challenge concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical community and how the resource addressed this challenge. One respondent wrote,

A concern could be that by not affirming the “absolute truth” of their faith, a chaplain would be diluting their understanding of God and what God asks of them. This resource encourages evangelical Christians to be present, to listen, to offer prayer and comments with an open and gracious hospitality.

As stated earlier, goal three scored lower than any other goal. Further, the score dropped to 4.8 when analyzing those respondents who have served solely in the local church. The reality that the goal is reported to be lower among those who solely serve in the local church reinforces what was noted in Chapter Three concerning the primacy of the proclamation of the Word to the detriment of

representative forms of ministry. Galli “bemoans church leadership models which overemphasize the need for ‘prophetic and charismatic’ leaders that then inadvertently denigrates every clergyperson who is a chaplain- in hospitals, in the military (and sport) as if these ministries are second class clergy” (Parker et al. 2016, 80).

One of the respondents who wrote religious affiliation: non-denominational Pentecostal and works in both the local church setting and as a professional chaplain wrote this response to the qualitative question for this goal.

A challenge for the validity of Evangelical chaplains is often the fact that they are not permitted to operate in evangelism. I have experienced this criticism when sharing stories of my encounters with patients as other Evangelicals will ask why I did not take the opportunity to share the gospel with my patient. The resource addressed this challenge in defining chaplaincy as a ministry not about proclamation but about presence and compassion. This does not demonize evangelism as some definitions have done, but it does differentiate chaplaincy and specify its focus and purpose.

### **Application**

In the application of this work to my continued ministry and the ministry of the church, I plan to have the handbook published. I will donate a handbook to the Ashland Theological Seminary for students who may be interested in pursuing ministry as a professional chaplain. I will then begin the process of marketing and sharing the handbook in every manner possible.

Discussions with my advisor Dr. Michael Elmore, and with Dr. Dawn Morton helped me gain insight into the idea that the handbook may contain two original ideas. First, the idea that authenticity is the bridge for the Evangelical Christian into the profession of professional chaplaincy. Second, is the image of Ananias as the archetypal figure of the first New Testament professional

evangelical chaplain. I plan on pursuing getting each of these ideas published as magazine or journal articles.

Within my personal ministry I plan to apply for opportunities to teach and train individuals who may be considering ministry as a professional chaplain. I believe this is where God is directing me and is also the place where I can make the greatest contribution to the kingdom of God at this point in my life. It is ultimately my hope that the handbook and a teaching career will assist hundreds, possibly more, evangelical Christians in following the call into the new mission field of professional chaplaincy.

I also plan to work on ways within the church to speak about professional chaplaincy in new ways. Thus, elevating representative ministry to an equal, complimentary position as proclamation of the Word. In practical terms I have been in initial discussion with Rev. Gary Clore who is the chairman of the extension ministries of the Global Methodist Church about the possibility of holding a conference titled *Authenticity and Pluralism: A Place for the Evangelical Christian in Professional Chaplaincy*.

I plan to continue to preach whenever and wherever possible. I like to say that I will stop preaching from a pulpit whenever the world no longer needs to hear good news. Finally, I am aware that my ministry as a bedside chaplain may be limited. I love the ministry, however, the wear and tear of thousands upon thousands of crises encounters, coupled with fifteen to twenty thousand miles of walking in the hospital, is beginning to take its toll.



### **Further Study**

Further study will be an attempt to keep up to date with current trends within professional chaplaincy and the wide range of evidence-based research that is occurring that demonstrates the importance of quality spiritual care and its relationship to improved patient outcome and best practices. During the three years I have worked on the handbook and project thesis there has been much additional information on professional chaplaincy and evidence-based research on patient outcomes.

As a board-certified chaplain, I am required to have fifty hours of continuing education. This provides the opportunity to stay aware of current trends in professional chaplaincy through seminars and continuing educational opportunities offered through my workplace.

A particular area of study within professional chaplaincy is literature concerning resiliency for the professional chaplain. Professional chaplaincy is challenging bodily, emotionally, and spiritually. Therefore, I want to research what might be available on this topic and potentially add to this literature for future generations of professional chaplains.

### **Personal Goals**

My personal goals have served as a steadying guide throughout this process and the complexities of life. When I began my Ashland Theological Seminary journey in January 2021 who could have anticipated the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. Who could have anticipated the chaos and at times violence, at both the national and international levels, that we have experienced.

Within my United Methodist Church who could have predicted the schism that has occurred within the denomination. And, more importantly, “how” the schism has taken place.

My project goals were in the context of continuing to work as an active professional chaplain working in patient care, with the three following goals.

1. I will pray daily for personal wisdom to then be able to serve those patients, families, and staff I serve as a professional chaplain.
2. I will model unity within diversity by seeking dignity and understanding among individuals who think and/or believe differently.
3. I will go on retreat and meditate on biblical passages on Christian leadership including Matthew 20:16, Matthew 25:34-40 and John 10:27 to grow in healthy biblically based forms of leadership.

Continuing to work as a professional chaplain at the bedside served to remind me daily of the importance of the work. It continued to teach me that sometimes the best we can do for God’s Vineyard is to simply show up and give the best we have on that given day. We may not be able to fix all the issues in an institution or within the world, but at the same time, we can show up and model Christian love and compassion and therefore, experience God and Christian joy in the gift of each day. Goals one and two have become a part of my daily discipline.

Personal goal three has continued to challenge me to seek Jesus’ help and God’s Word when addressing old wounds and personal growth. Seeing myself in a different form of leadership has been a long and difficult journey. I am

incredibly blessed to have had friends, colleagues and my wife Kristy who believed in me and encouraged me to see myself differently. I know that this will continue to be a life-long effort, however, I am much farther along today than I was five years ago.

In May 2022, I was approached by my District Superintendent about serving three small churches in the Zanesville area. I accepted and serving these churches has been an incredible blessing to my spirit. Participating in public worship and proclaiming the good news of Christ feeds my spirit for the challenges and responsibilities of the next week. It can be physically exhausting, though at this time, the balance is beneficial, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

#### A New Way for Evangelicals to View Chaplaincy

As I conclude the research and writing for this degree, it is a hope that through this effort, I may be able to share a new way for evangelicals to view chaplaincy. In the summer of 2021, I believe God placed an image on my mind for professional chaplaincy. I wrote this image while vacationing with my family.

Evangelical Christians have a necessary role within the ministry of professional chaplaincy and more importantly within the biblical witness of God's healing intent. Turning to the Bible, the evangelical Christian can find a model for professional chaplaincy within Ananias who is the archetypal evangelical professional chaplain.

#### **Ananias: The First New Testament Professional Evangelical Chaplain**

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am Lord."

The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come and lay hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind up all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. (Acts 9:10-19)

As described in this passage, Ananias demonstrates seven characteristics of a professional evangelical chaplain. First, Ananias is in mission. He is called by God for a purpose and Ananias answers the call (Acts 9:10). Second, the movement of professional chaplaincy is to go where people reside. Ananias goes and enters the house where Saul is at; blind and in need of a healing touch (Acts 9:17). Third, professional chaplaincy is a ministry to all. Ananias is obedient and moves beyond the community to serve Saul (Acts 9:13-14). Fourth, professional chaplaincy does not always make sense. It is very difficult to explain to others what a professional chaplain does and often to the hearer it is hard to understand why anyone would want to be a professional chaplain. Initially, Ananias objects to the Lord and reminds the Lord of Saul's history and reputation (Acts 9:13-14). It would not seem logical to want to go in the name of the Lord to be a healing agent to someone who had caused so much harm and misery to the faithful followers of Jesus.

Fifth, a professional chaplain seeks to be a blessing to others. In this way,

the professional chaplain seeks to be a healing agent physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Ananias touches Saul (Acts 9:17). This touch by a professional chaplain does not always occur in a physical way, however, many times holding a person's hand can be healing. Sixth, all professional chaplains are ordained clergy, therefore, there are times the professional chaplain serves in a capacity congruent with their ordination and religious practices, rituals, and sacraments.

In his actions, Ananias is the first evangelical professional chaplain; he goes to Saul as a representative of Jesus and speaks in the name of Jesus. Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother, Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17). Finally, Ananias baptized Saul.

Seventh, Ananias is largely forgotten. Throughout his travels and his letters, the Apostle Paul does not mention Ananias by name. One can assume that the experience of Ananias in his life would have been profound to Paul, however, Paul recognizes Jesus the risen Savior, as the true active, healing agent in his life. Therefore, Paul rejoices in Christ!

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Throughout this project I have discussed how God is using professional chaplaincy in a multi-cultural reality to reach the unchurched and those who are not currently having their needs met by the traditional form of church. I have highlighted the need for evangelical Christians to "show up" and serve as professional chaplains as a best practice in serving all persons. This then

benefits the profession of professional chaplaincy and assists the profession of professional chaplaincy to live more faithfully into its own stated vision.

I have discussed the validity of representative ministry as a valid form of evangelism that does not negate the need for the proclamation of the Word. Drawing upon the historical figures of St. Francis of Assisi, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Mother Teresa, I have focused on the simplicity and effectiveness of representative ministry and how God has used such movements in the past in evangelical ways that grew the kingdom of God.

I argued that representative ministry, as demonstrated in professional chaplaincy, is biblically, theologically, and historically rooted and therefore has been used by God as a transformative, evangelical voice within God's choir. Finally, I suggested the professional chaplaincy is being used by God within the unique challenges of our multi-cultural society where many are unchurched or not having their needs met by traditional forms of church.

Mother Teresa addresses the complexity and simplicity of our day when she wrote concerning her belief and understanding of the greatest suffering, "the greatest suffering is being unloved, just having no one" (Teresa 1997, 14-15).

The professional chaplain, in the spirit of representative ministry, meets the greatest need of suffering. The professional chaplain is a physical, compassionate presence that reflects value, meaning and dignity of the other through one's compassionate presence, active listening, physical touch, empathetic listening, at times and when appropriate prayer, and encouragement.

APPENDIX I  
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAINCY:  
A HANDBOOK OF DISCERNMENT FOR EVANGELICALS CONSIDERING  
MINISTRY AS A PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAIN

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By  
John Ruiz M.Div., BCC

ASHLAND, OHIO

DECEMBER 14, 2022

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project is to create a handbook that will provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The research question is: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

## **Overview**

This handbook will present a way that God is reaching into our multi-cultural society through the ministry of professional chaplaincy. It will provide a biblical, theological and practical framework for the ministry of professional chaplaincy. The resource will advocate for a role for the evangelical Christian in professional chaplaincy. Finally, this handbook will highlight the need for evangelical Christians in professional chaplaincy as a best practice in serving all persons thus assisting the profession of chaplaincy to live more faithfully into its own stated vision.

A goal of this resource is to allow the reader to understand the ministry, challenges, obstacles, joys, and art of professional chaplaincy. In this way, the handbook will serve as a tool of discernment and instruction for evangelical Christians who might be considering ministry as a professional chaplain.

## **Foundations**

My fifteen years serving as a professional chaplain has shown me three things. First, God is working with Evangelical Christians through the profession of chaplaincy to reach people, many times unchurched, within our multi-cultural reality. Second, there are obstacles to the profession of chaplaincy; specifically,



the assumption of pluralism, the scope of ministry that now includes all people and the challenge of proselytization which is strictly forbidden. Third, the reality that evangelical Christians are vastly under-represented in the profession.

My eighteen years serving as a pastor in the local church has taught me that the ministry of professional chaplaincy is often not seen in the same regard as local church ministry. Therefore, there is a need to argue for the validity of ministry beyond the local church through professional chaplaincy as a form of evangelism. This requires a shift from a focus from proclamation of the Word to a focus on representative ministry. Taken together these teachings validate the church in ministry beyond the church walls and the value of representative ministry.

#### Personal Background

I am blessed to have had a wide variety of experiences within various voices within the Christian family and within my ministry as a board-certified chaplain. I was raised in the Roman Catholic church, post-Vatican II. Faith became real to me between the age of six and eight years.

At the age of nineteen I became involved in the United Methodist church. I was drawn to the empowerment of the laity, singing our theology and especially encouragement to read one's Bible. During this period the words of scripture became alive in a new way, and I was encouraged to put my faith into practice. At the age of twenty-seven I entered seminary and attended between 1993-1996. I began serving as a student pastor in April 1995 and was ordained an elder in the United Methodist church in 1999. Serving in the local church has been

challenging and amazing. To date I have served as a pastor in the local church for eighteen years. I continue to serve in the local church when time and physical energy allows. Currently, I am serving three small churches in the Zanesville, Ohio area.

In my personal life I have been blessed by family members, friends and co-workers who come from a Pentecostal foundation. I have learned from their endurance in faith and the evidence of God in their lives. My life experiences with faithful Christians from a vast array of Christian denominations and foundations has taught me that God is more than we can ever know, and we are more when we come together, work together, and respect the differences and gifts each brings to the “Christian choir”.

In April 2007, I began my ministry as a chaplain. I completed my four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and became a board-certified chaplain (BCC) in 2015. A constant during these past fifteen years has been serving as an emergency department chaplain. This means I often serve families and staff in crisis situations. I have also had extensive experience in hospice/palliative care, and general hospital visits. During the pandemic, being the senior member on the staff, I was assigned a thirty-two-bed intensive care unit for COVID+ patients.

My covid experience led to the writing and publication of a book titled, *A Chaplain’s Perspective on the 2020-2021 Pandemic: Tragedy, Resilience, Hope*. The book has added to my ministry as it has led to opportunities to share the book in various settings. People have told me that the book has helped them process their own pandemic experience and assisted them in making some

sense of the experience. I believe moving forward writing will become a bigger focus that God is leading me in ministry.

My personal life experiences and my experiences in ministry convince me that God is active and alive. Serving as a professional chaplain has demonstrated to me that God is creating a way to reach people in a multi-cultural society. One of these avenues that God is creating is through the ministry of professional chaplaincy.

### Biblical Research

This biblical research will explore the following two scriptural passages: I John 2:1-2 and I John 4:19-21. The first passage: I John 2:1-2 will serve as a lens into Johannine theology and the understanding of God's universal salvific will (Black 1998, 388, Brown 1982, 242, Rensberger 1997, 57-58, and Thomas 2004, 90). The second passage: I John 4:19-21 will examine how God's universal salvific will is put into practice by those who confess Jesus as Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit now extend this love ethic to include all people (Black 1998, 432, Brown 1982, 563-565, Loader 1992, 57-58, McDermond 2011, 232, Sloyan 1995, 49, and Thomas 2004, 237).

The gospel of John begins with a creation account (I John 1:5) thus reminding the reader of earlier creation accounts known within the community. John 1:9 then introduces God's universal salvific will in "light of the one who shines in the darkness" (John 1:5a NSRV). This theme is then reinforced with John 1:9 "The true light which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" (NSRV). James McPolin writes, "The Word was the light who, in coming into the

world, enlightens 'every man' for, as perfect and authentic revealer, he provides light to every man and in some mysterious way his work touches even those who do not know him" (McPolin 1979, 7).

This biblical foundation will then analyze three modern day interpretations and issues found in I John to then allow for the hearing of the Johannine voice within the context of its original setting and meaning. After addressing these interpretations and issues the implications of I John will be discussed.

Specifically, the love ethic first within the community of believers (I John 1:10). Unity rooted in confession of Christ which is evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit (I John 4:2-3 and I John 4:15). Love in action understood in the light of God's universal salvific will (I John 4:14) which extends to all (I John 4:21) then serves as the foundation for unity within diversity.

#### Theological Research

The theological foundations that are highlighted in this section include first, the logic of mission that extends to all persons as a theme of God's salvific intent. Second, a reflection on the Trinity and how a Trinitarian understanding of unity within diversity can dialogue with various perspectives on unity including homogeny, dualism, and pluralism.

Richard Bauckham examined the logic of mission in a postmodern world in the book *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Bauckham summarized this point writing, "Mission takes place between the highly particular history of Jesus and the universal goal of God's coming

kingdom” (Bauckham 2003, 84). Veli-Matti Karkkainen succinctly states, “The church exists in mission” (Green et al. 2018, 28).

Walter Brueggemann writes concerning the logic of mission and the need for “human community not defined by commodity”. Brueggemann analyzes that “despair is the defining mark of the context for church mission in the twenty-first century” and the Christian as a “community of hope” must engage this reality (Brueggemann 2001, 155).

In the book *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context*, Brueggemann includes an essay written by theologian Janos D. Pasztor who writes concerning the centrality of Trinitarian theology, “It is Trinitarian theology that gives us the tools for critical examination of the ideas and practices of the church and its mission, past and present” (Brueggemann 2001, 146).

Robert Kress and the article titled, “Unity in Diversity: Toward an Ecumenical Perichoresic Kenotic Ontology” speaks into tendencies for group homogeneity with insights from the Trinity. Kress relates this to the Church universal the “One Church of the One God whose oneness is not monistic but communal” (Kress 1990).

Marianne Meye Thompson and the article titled, “The Gospel of John and Early Trinitarian Thought: The Unity of God in John, Irenaeus and Tertullian” provides insight into Irenaeus thought. Thompson writes concerning Irenaeus (130-202 AD) and his struggles with early Gnosticism who sought to demote the creator God to a secondary and inferior status. Thompson writes, “Irenaeus combats the Gnostics who wished to sever the God who created from the God

who saves” (Thompson 2014, 155). In this way, Irenaeus’ understanding of the co-equality in the Trinity frees us from dualistic thinking.

Kevin Giles emphasizes that “diversity is of the nature of the church, not a sin to be overcome. Unity within diversity inherent in the divine Trinity of persons that in an analogous way should characterize the life of the church in its local, regional, international, and universal dimension. This fellowship does not aim to overcome all diversity; but rather to embrace it in dynamic, relational, and growing bond of love and understanding” (Giles 1995, 202).

#### Historical Research

The historical research will cover a brief examination of representative ministry, which is the heart of professional chaplaincy. Leonardo Boff places Jesus as the archetypal representation of representative ministry that is focused on peace and healing. Boff writes, “It was Jesus who taught us to insist even to the point of pestering (Luke 11:5-8). He will give us his peace, a peace achieved through service rather than through power” (Boff 2001, 17).

Throughout Christian history there has been times when it became necessary for the Christian witness to refocus the Christian vision towards the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the voiceless. St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) challenged the church and Christian witness of his day in such a simple and powerful way that it continues to speak to many throughout the world today. Donald Soto recognizes the power of St. Francis’s witness, “His life and example- and not let it be stressed, anything specific he said and wrote- had an

integrity that challenges our presumptions about what constitutes a good life, not to say a respectable approach to religion” (Soto 2002, xvii).

We have the example of Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), the founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. As a young woman, McPherson served as a missionary to China. Led by the Spirit she began serving the needs within her own community in Los Angeles eventually establishing the first Foursquare church, Angelus Temple, in 1923. The movement has held a priority to mission, sending out missionaries and service to the poor. McPherson modeled the need for both evangelism as proclamation and representative ministry. Esther O. Cephas describes one of McPherson’s great contributions as “serving human needs while preaching salvation goes hand in hand” (Cephas 2022, 40).

More recently, is the example of Mother Teresa (1910-1997) who received permission from the Holy See to start her own order, “The Missionaries of Charity” whose primary task was to love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after (nobleprize.org). In the book *Mother Teresa: In the Heart of the World: Thoughts, Stories, & Prayers* is a writing that summarizes her understanding of representative ministry. Mother Teresa writes concerning her belief and understanding of suffering, “the greatest suffering is being unloved, just having no one” (Teresa 1997, 14-15).

The professional chaplain, in the spirit of representative ministry, meets this greatest need of suffering. The professional chaplain is a physical, compassionate presence that reflects value, meaning and dignity of the other

through one's compassionate presence, active listening, physical touch, empathetic listening, and encouragement.

### Contemporary Literature

Contemporary Literature will examine challenges and opportunities that have developed in professional chaplaincy because of changes made in the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy*. These challenges and opportunities developed in 2004 when the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy* broadened the scope within which professional chaplains serve. In the *Common Standards of Professional Chaplaincy*, the Association of Professional Chaplains mandated that “chaplains are to provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual and religious practices” (Cadge and Sigalow 2013, 147). This led to the perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig where it was believed that having a pluralistic worldview, meaning no tradition has the ‘corner on truth’ would be a requirement to be an effective professional chaplain (Fukuyama and Sevig 2004, 29).

The movement of scope in ministry to include all people has led to growth within the profession. The recent article titled *Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers: The Emergence and Growth of Chaplaincy Programs in Theological Education* discovered “substantial growth in chaplaincy-focused programs in theological schools in the last twenty years” (Cadge et al 2020). This change in scope in ministry has also created opportunities to minister with persons, especially young people, who might not trust organized religion and clergy in



general who are willing to trust a chaplain. Therefore, moving into the future it may be chaplains who will be the primary healers to individuals in the public sphere during times of crisis (Cadge et al 2020).

The perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig who discussed the need for a pluralistic worldview to be an effective professional chaplain is being challenged by a new perspective of authenticity in practice and personhood. The article *The Chaplain as an Authentic and an Ethical Presence* (Zucker, Bradley and Tucker 2007) question if inauthenticity in practice by the professional chaplain may do harm to both those being served and the chaplain. Instead, the writers advocate for authenticity by the professional chaplain and for the professional chaplain to make referrals to other professional chaplains of clergy who can best serve a patient's and families' needs.

### Context

The participants in this project will be professional chaplains and those who instruct people considering professional chaplaincy. The participants will include both male and female. The participants will serve as professional chaplains in a variety of settings. The participants will come from various Evangelical communities who find unity in their agreement that "Jesus Saves". These participants will make up an expert panel of ten to fifteen members to review the handbook.

### Definition of Terms

**Evangelism:** A process in which a Christian holds the absolute truth "Jesus Saves" and shares this truth with others. The World Council of Churches

proclaim that the Lord Jesus is “God and Saviour according to the Scriptures” to be a foundational declaration (Karkkainen cited the WCC and Ecumenical Movement).

**Archetypal:** A model figure.

**Pastoral Care:** Ministry that occurs to those within one’s community or parish. There is a sense of familiarity in the relationship.

**Spiritual Care:** Ministry that occurs to all persons. Prior to the spiritual care visit there is no familiarity in the relationship. This is the starting point for ministry for a board-certified chaplain who is called to serve all people.

**Proclamation Ministry:** Proclamation ministry is the preaching and teaching of biblical principles and the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Representative Ministry:** Representative ministry is a ministry rooted in compassionate presence and journeying alongside another. Legend recalls that St. Francis of Assisi said, “When all else fails, use words.”

**Board Certified Chaplain:** In this resource I am focusing on board certified chaplaincy through the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). Affiliation in an accredited association for professional chaplains is a requirement for most employment opportunities.

### **Project Goals**

The purpose of this project is to create a handbook that will provide insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The resource question is: In what ways does the

handbook provide practical insights leading toward discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy?

The project goals are:

1. The resource will identify how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through the profession of chaplaincy.
2. The resource will identify three obstacles for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains (BCC).
3. The resource will identify three challenges concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical Christian community.
4. The resource will provide case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.
5. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principles of authenticity.
6. The resource will provide tools for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.

### **Design, Procedure and Assessment**

The purpose of this project is to create a handbook that will provide practical insights leading toward discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy. The research question is: In what ways does the handbook provide practical insights leading towards discernment for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy? A panel of professional chaplains will evaluate the handbook for clarity, relevance, and application. The panel, consisting of professional chaplains serving in a

variety of settings, will analyze if the handbook gives a realistic picture of ministry as a professional chaplain, effectively identifies challenges in both the world of professional chaplaincy and within the church for Evangelicals considering ministry as a professional chaplain, provides practical insights for navigating these obstacles to then enter and serve successfully in ministry as a professional chaplain, and finally evaluate if the handbook is a valuable tool for discernment.

Participation will be voluntary, and assessments will be anonymous. Participants will be given an assessment tool and eight weeks to evaluate the handbook, and then asked to complete an anonymous online assessment. A six-point Likert scale will be used to measure effectiveness. The scale will range from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

### **Personal Goals**

My personal goals include continuing to work as an active professional chaplain working in patient care. I believe this continued practice will inform my growth in leadership.

1. I will pray daily for personal wisdom to then be able to serve those patients, families, and staff I serve as a professional chaplain.
2. I will model unity within diversity by seeking dignity and understanding among individuals who think and/or believe differently.
3. I will go on a retreat and meditate on biblical passages on Christian leadership including Matthew 20:16, Matthew 25:34-40 and John 10:27 to grow in healthy biblically based forms of leadership.

### **Core Team**

#### **Academic Adviser**

Dr. Michael Elmore, Foursquare Church, Pastor, Professional Board-Certified Chaplain. Dr. Elmore and I have met for monthly phone conversations for the past year. Dr. Elmore has thoughtfully challenged my thinking and been a source of encouragement.

#### **Research Consultant**

Daniel O'Brien, Circulation and Digital Services Librarian at Ashland Theological School. Daniel O'Brien gave great assistance in locating material, especially when using internet resources to find current materials.

#### **Field Consultant**

Dr. Eric Holley, Church of God (Tennessee), Evangelist and Professional Board-Certified Chaplain. Dr. Holley has been a very good friend and colleague for the past ten years. Dr. Holley gave encouragement for me to pursue a Doctor of Ministry program.

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## APPENDIX II

June 28, 2023

Dear Professional Colleague,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this survey.

I am a Doctor of Ministry candidate with a focus on chaplaincy at Ashland Theological Seminary (Ashland, Ohio). I am an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and a Board Certified Chaplain (BCCI). As part of my final project, I wrote a resource, *A Handbook for Evangelicals Considering Ministry as Professional Chaplains*.

The survey includes a Likert Scale rating of 1-6, and a few open-ended questions. There are no right or wrong answers. The survey is voluntary and anonymous.

Please click on the link below and complete all the questions. My hope is to have between 10 to 15 respondents which will provide feedback and useful conclusions. My prayer is that the handbook provides a resource for people to navigate the process of becoming a board certified professional chaplain. The deadline for completing the survey is **August 30**.

After you have completed the survey please return with clear answers marked on the Word document to my email [jruiz3@ashland.edu](mailto:jruiz3@ashland.edu)

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few”*

*Matthew 9:37*

Thank you and may God's grace and peace be with you!

Sincerely,

John Ruiz M.Div., BCC



## Demographics

### Current Ministry Setting

- ☐ Professional Chaplaincy  
☐ Local Church or Church Administration  
☐ Both

### Years of Service at Current Ministry

- ☐ Professional Chaplain  
☐ Local Church Ministry  
☐ Combined

### Sexual Orientation

- ☐ Male ☐ Female  
☐ Other ☐ Care Not to Respond

### Religious Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_

### If Board Certified, what organization are you certified with?

- ☐ APCE ☐ NACC ☐ NAJC ☐ NCMAF ☐ ICPC ☐ Other

## Likert Scale Questionnaire

**Directions and Scale:** Please answer the questions by circling the number that best applies. Choose only one number.

6-Strongly Agree	5-Moderately Agree	4-Slightly Agree
3-Slightly Disagree	2-Moderately Disagree	1-Strongly Disagree

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The resource identified an understanding of how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural reality through professional chaplaincy.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. The resource provided chaplain vignettes as a tool of unity within diversity in practice by a professional chaplain.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. The resource provided examples of Evangelical Christians functioning as professional chaplains based on authenticity.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. The resource provided case studies that demonstrated times of healing.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. The resource identified the obstacle of pluralism for Evangelical Christians to become Board Certified Chaplains.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. The resource identified the challenge of keeping a biblical framework that speaks into the validity of professional chaplaincy.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. The resource provided case studies for Evangelical Christians to foster discernment.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. The resource identified the obstacle of the incompatibility of proselytization within professional chaplaincy.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have served people from faith traditions that are not Christian through professional chaplaincy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**Directions and Scale:** Please answer the questions by circling the number that best applies. Choose only one number.

6- Strongly Agree      5- Moderately Agree      4-Slightly Agree  
 3-Slightly Disagree      2- Moderately Disagree      1-Strongly Disagree

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. The resource provided examples for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on the principle of authenticity.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. The resource provided the imagery of the Trinity as a tool for Evangelical Christians considering professional chaplaincy based on unity within diversity.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. The resource provided case studies that demonstrated some of the challenges that occur within professional chaplaincy.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13. The resource identified examples of Evangelical Christians who have ministered to Christians who are currently unchurched.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. The resource identified the challenge of using historical examples demonstrating the validity of representative ministry as a form of evangelism.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 15. The resource identified the obstacle of scope of practice from ministry to one's parish to understanding the scope of practice is all people.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 16. The resource identified the challenge within the church of primacy of proclamation of the Word with the balance of representative ministry as a valid form of evangelism.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 17. The resource provided a theological framework as a tool for the benefit of unity within diversity represented by the Evangelical Christian for the profession of professional chaplaincy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**Directions and Scale:** Please answer the questions by circling the number that best applies. Choose only one number.

6- Strongly Agree      5- Moderately Agree      4- Slightly Agree  
3- Slightly Disagree      2- Moderately Disagree      1- Strongly Disagree

18. The resource provided examples the value of authenticity by the Evangelical Christian to assist professional chaplaincy to live into its own stated vision more fully.      1      2      3      4      5      6

### **Qualitative Questions**

1. Share the best one or two ways the resource identified how God is using Evangelical Christians in a multi-cultural society through professional chaplaincy.
2. Share an obstacle for Evangelical Christians to become a Board Certified Chaplain and how the resource addressed this obstacle.
3. Share a challenge concerning the validity of professional chaplaincy within the Evangelical community and how the resource addressed this challenge.
4. In your reading of the handbook what case study demonstrated the validity of the ministry of professional chaplaincy and why?
5. In what ways did the handbook demonstrate authenticity in practice by the professional chaplain?
6. In what ways does the Evangelical Christian taking their place within the profession of professional chaplaincy serve as a benefit to the profession of professional chaplaincy?

APPENDIX III

**A Handbook of Discernment for Evangelicals**  
**Considering Ministry as a Professional Chaplain**

**By John Ruiz M.Div. BCC**

This book is dedicated to the trailblazers  
and wildflowers who have taught me,  
mentored me and blessed my life.

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to encourage discernment for Evangelical Christians who are considering ministry as a professional chaplain. The handbook illustrates practical applications of the art of chaplaincy and provides a framework for navigating entry into the profession that occurs at both the professional chaplain and church level. The resource is also designed for teachers who instruct individuals considering professional chaplaincy. The hope is to encourage and assist Evangelical Christians who feel called to the ministry of professional chaplains to enter and successfully practice their ministry. The reason for the handbook is my belief and observation, working sixteen-plus years as a professional chaplain, that God is using professional chaplaincy in a multi-cultural reality to reach the unchurched and those who are not currently having their needs met by the traditional form of church.

## **Ecclesial Context**

I began serving as a pastor in the local church in 1995 and was ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church in 1999. I have served as a pastor in the local church for eighteen years. I currently continue to serve as a pastor to three small churches in the Zanesville, Ohio area.

In April 2007, I began ministry as a chaplain. I completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and became a board-certified chaplain (BCC) in 2015. A constant during these sixteen-plus years has been serving as an emergency department chaplain. In this role, I often serve people in times of

deep emotion, pain, and grief. I am also the primary chaplain in the Medical Intensive Care Unit and the Neurological Intensive Care Unit. In these areas of the hospital, I often companion with patients and families. These medical journeys can vary greatly. During the COVID-19 pandemic, being the senior member of the staff, I was assigned a thirty-two bed intensive care unit for COVID+ patients. My COVID-19 experience led to the writing and publication of a book titled, *A Chaplain's Perspective on the 2020-2021 Pandemic: Tragedy, Resilience, Hope*.

## **Contemporary Foundation**

During my time as a professional chaplain, it has become apparent that any person within a faith tradition based upon a belief in an absolute truth can have difficulty when entering the profession. A few examples are the Jewish believer who holds the absolute truth, "There is no God but Yahweh," the Catholic believer who holds the absolute truth, "Salvation is known in and through the Church," and the Islamic believer who holds the absolute truth in Mohammad and the teachings of the Koran. This is true as well for the Evangelical Christian who holds the absolute truth, "Jesus Saves." This is consistent with the World Council of Churches who proclaim that the Lord Jesus Christ is "God and Savior according to the Scriptures," a foundational declaration of that body (Karkkainen, ed. Green et al. 2018, 27).

The challenge to those whose faith is rooted in these beliefs developed in 2004 when the *Common Standard of Professional Chaplaincy* broadened the scope within which professional chaplains serve. In the *Common Standards of*

*Professional Chaplaincy*, the Association of Professional Chaplains mandated that “chaplains are to provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual practices” (Cadge and Sigalow 2013, 147). This led to the perspective summarized by Fukuyama and Sevig who understood that having a pluralistic worldview, meaning no tradition has the ‘corner on truth’ would be a requirement to be an effective professional chaplain (Fukuyama and Sevig 2004, 29).

The image used when considering professional chaplaincy is that of a sandbox. Originally, it was believed that a pluralistic worldview would mean everyone would be allowed in the sandbox of professional chaplaincy. However, this has not been the case and those traditions that hold an absolute truth have had difficulty entering the “sandbox”, meaning the profession of professional chaplaincy as a board-certified chaplain. Board-certification is a requirement for many, if not most, positions in professional chaplaincy. This handbook will explore how this assumption is changing within the profession of professional chaplaincy from pluralism to authenticity in practice and personhood.

## **Overview of Handbook**

Chapter 1: *A Blessing to the Nations and the Implications for Professional Chaplaincy* examines the logic of mission from a Christian perspective and a brief exploration of God’s universal salvific intent. This is necessary within professional chaplaincy which broadens the scope of ministry from only participants in one’s parish, church, or denomination, to include all people. This scope suggests that the world is one’s parish, which becomes the starting point

of professional chaplaincy. The chapter then examines the biblical figure of Ananias in the book of Acts as an archetypal figure for professional chaplaincy. Finally, it offers a practical application of professional chaplains as healing agents during times of grief and loss and the use of biblical imagery on grief and healing.

Chapter 2: *Implications of Authenticity in Professional Chaplaincy: A Biblical Perspective* provides an exploration of God's universal salvific intent now understood through the life, death, and resurrection within the Johannine community. This chapter concludes with a discussion on marriage and LGBTQ+ issues. This discussion will lead to the reality of authenticity. The reality of authenticity brings the first foot into the sandbox of professional chaplaincy for the Evangelical Christian.

Chapter 3: *The Mystery of the Trinity and Forms of Unity* dialogues with pluralism and the various ways unity is formed. The chapter explores the contributions of the Christian community in conversations concerning unity within communities and dignity within all people. Finally, it provides consideration of the need for Evangelical Christians to assume their role within professional chaplaincy to assist the profession of professional chaplaincy to live into its own mission, and ministry more faithfully.

Chapter 4: *Paradigm Shifts in the World of Professional Chaplaincy and a Role for Evangelical Christian Chaplains* examines the shift in professional chaplaincy from an approach that focuses on "how" a person gets better to often also includes "if" a person gets better. This shift is occurring because of

evidence-based research. The chapter then examines challenges for entry and practice as board-certified chaplains. The issue of authenticity will be re-examined as will the need for integrity in personhood as seen in practice by the Evangelical Christian Chaplain. The need for integrity in personhood by the Evangelical Christian Chaplain places the second foot into the sandbox of professional chaplaincy.

Chapter 5: *Living in the Mystery and Experiencing the Divine* explores distinct contributions in ministry that occur when Evangelical Christians take their place in professional chaplaincy. In other words, it begins to examine the ministry that would not take place and the healing that would not occur in those being served if Evangelical Christian chaplains were not present.

Chapter 6: *Trailblazers: Interviews from Professional Chaplains* includes interviews with Evangelical Christians who have successfully served in the ministry of professional chaplain. These people have helped set a trail for others to follow.

Chapter 7: *The Professional Chaplain as Evangelist* will briefly examine history and recent times when God has used representative ministry as a form of evangelism. It concludes with encouragement for more Evangelical Christians to enter God's vineyard of professional chaplaincy.

As a note of information, names and small details have been changed in the pastoral care examples from the bedside to preserve confidentiality. Also, unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV).

## APPENDIX IV

### CHAPLAINCY AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the unique and necessary position of the professional chaplain in the institutions they serve. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for the ministry of presence to staff and the importance of leadership in meaning-making for the community in profound ways. Being a presence primarily among staff, since family visitation was often restricted, provided a sense of support and comradery. The chaplain often served as an unspoken presence who represented hope and resiliency.

Overhead prayer throughout the hospital was often the only way to effectively provide spiritual support to covid patients who were being quarantined. This prayer served as a form of meaning making, centering and leadership.

For many staff who reside in Christian traditions the overhead prayer is waited upon and often responded to as the chaplain walks the hall later in the day. Further, the prayer demonstrates leadership of authentically living one's faith within the community which then provides permission for all patients, families, and staff to access their own faith traditions for meaning making, strength and hope.

Friday, March 27, 2020, was the day COVID-19 entered the hospital I serve. For the first several Mondays when the pandemic was a daily part of our lives, I prayed this prayer. Each time the feedback from the staff was plentiful. I prayed,

To everything there is a Season... (Ecclesiastes 3:1a)

Oh, good and gracious God; Our Heavenly Father. So much of life has changed for each of us in the recent past and today we face challenges that we could not have imagined.

Be with us dear God. Be with us in our frustrations and fears. Be with us whenever we might feel overwhelmed and fatigued. Be with us each day as we do the best we possibly can for those we serve and for each other. Be with us in our weeping and in our resiliency.

Bless those Heavenly Father that we love and carry with us in our minds and in our hearts. Give us strength and courage. Fill us with compassion and give us the wisdom to know when it is time to be still and allow You to refresh our souls so we can continue to face the challenges before us rooted in Your truth and hope.

For there is a time for every season. A time to weep and a time to laugh. Lead us, Oh God, to the time of laughter once again. In Your Holy name we pray. Amen. (Ruiz 2021, 4-5).

Professional chaplains serve as part of an interdisciplinary team. The professional chaplain, as part of the interdisciplinary team, provides unique services for the patients, staff, and institutions they work. One of the unique services provided by the professional chaplain is being a worship leader and representative. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for the professional chaplain fulfilling this role in a profound way.

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