

## Living Church in the World

### Chaplaincy and the Mission of the Church

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## **Living Church in the World: Chaplaincy and the Mission of the Church**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There has been recent growth in chaplaincy in community contexts but little or no empirical research into chaplaincy practice and its significance for the mission and ministry of the Church. This article presents a case study of the development of a chaplaincy role in a rural context as part of a wider qualitative research project designed to develop understanding of chaplaincy practice. The study describes the context and practice, processes and relationships involved in the development of the role. The data are analysed with reference to the integrity of chaplaincy as a form of ministry and its significance for the mission of the church as part of the *missio Dei*. The findings suggest that chaplaincy does have its own integrity as a form of ministry, that it has a key role to play in the mission of the church in England and that further case studies are needed in order to establish a fuller understanding of the integrity of chaplaincy and its place within the mission of the church as a significant way of living church in the world.

Keywords: chaplaincy; church; community context; mission; practice.

### *Introduction: The Research Context*

Interest in chaplaincy in community contexts has grown in recent years both from secular organizations such as retail outlets and care homes and from different church denominations. For example, the Methodist Church undertook a chaplaincy feasibility study in 2009 (Culver 2009) followed by a chaplaincy development project. As a former chaplain and researcher currently tasked with developing the theological understanding and praxis of chaplaincy, I want to understand why

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chaplaincy has become the focus of renewed interest as a form of ministry and what the significance of this might be for the mission of the contemporary church.

While there is considerable literature and research relating to chaplaincy in institutional contexts such as healthcare (Mowat 2008; Swift 2009) there is little relating to the theological, ecclesiological or cultural significance of the current growth in interest in chaplaincy in community contexts: *Chaplaincy: The Church's Sector Ministries* (Legood 1999) and *Being a Chaplain* (Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt 2011) seem to be the only texts addressing the range of chaplaincy in community contexts. Both these texts offer a substantial number of practitioner reflections bracketed by theological and sociological reflections on different aspects of chaplaincy practice but they do not delineate what chaplaincy is. As a former Healthcare Chaplain I am aware of the descriptions and self-understandings generated by more established forms of chaplaincy. However, emergent forms of chaplaincy in the community have been less well described. Taking a practical theological approach, this research therefore aims to describe the current practice of emergent forms of chaplaincy as the basis for analysis and understanding.

In order to discover more about current chaplaincy practice and to establish the need for research, in 2009 I undertook a scoping survey (Slater 2009). I interviewed chaplains from a wide variety of contexts along with several National Advisers for different areas of chaplaincy work. What emerged was a complex picture of extensive chaplaincy involvement in every area of life. However, I found no research into the extent or nature of chaplaincy practice or into the significance of this form of ministry for the Church. There was a need for further research.

In response to this need, this article presents a case study of the practice of one agricultural chaplaincy located in an Anglican rural benefice comprising four parishes with five churches. The study is a first step in an attempt to excavate the significance of chaplaincy roles for the Church's mission. While this is an Anglican context, I hope that the study will resonate with people's experiences within different denominations and their reflections on chaplaincy.

One of the difficulties when trying to study contemporary chaplaincy in community contexts is that the contexts are dauntingly diverse and chaplaincy looks different in each context. While I am aware that the use of the terms "community" and "rural" is not straightforward and that they have their own literature, the purpose of this article is to focus on the increasingly commonly used word "chaplaincy" in order to begin to describe how it is being used in practice. There are no recognized definitions and there is no consensus about what constitutes chaplaincy

outside major institutions like the NHS and prisons. What distinguishes a chaplaincy role from a role as a parish minister and what does being a chaplain require? The number of roles may have grown but, as far as I am aware, no attempt has been made to study this form of ministerial engagement in a coherent way.

This study therefore seeks to describe how a chaplaincy role emerges and develops, the processes and relationships that are in play and what is distinctive about the role. It then considers what the significance of the development of such roles might be in the current cultural and ecclesial context. This represents the first stage in a research process that aims to articulate the integrity of chaplaincy and to issue in a fuller understanding of the part it plays in the mission of the church.

### *The Case Study Context*

The context is a rural benefice comprising four parishes with five churches. Chris, the vicar, is a retired farmer and self-supporting minister who trained for ordination after spending most of her life as a livestock farmer in the area in which she now ministers. The farm she used to own is in the village in which she now lives. As a curate in the benefice, Chris asked the then bishop if she could take on the role of Rural Life Officer advising the diocese and parishes on rural issues. The bishop agreed and she was licensed to the role in 2006. When her training incumbent retired, Chris asked if she could take on running the benefice. This was agreed and she is now vicar. This means that Chris has several concurrent roles: vicar of a multi-parish benefice; Diocesan Rural Life Officer; and Agricultural Chaplain. Chris is also Regional Chaplain for Farm Crisis Network which provides a helpline and volunteer support to the farming community. This amounts to a substantial and longstanding personal and professional involvement in the rural and farming community of which she is a part.

Chris developed the agricultural chaplaincy role within the Rural Life Officer remit in the context of organizational change. Before Chris took on the Rural Life Officer role it was a half-time paid diocesan job located within the diocesan Forum for Social Responsibility and managed from within the Forum. After Chris took on the role of a self-supporting minister, the diocese was reorganized, the managerial post within the Forum for Social Responsibility was abolished and the post is now line-managed by the Area Bishop whom Chris sees three or four times a year. Chris is licensed by the bishop to minister to the farming and rural community across the diocese. She is aware that the potential reach of her ministry across parish boundaries means that liaising with

local clergy and maintaining good relationships across the diocese are important aspects of the work. Although Chris initially produced a suggested Rural Life Officer job description there is nothing detailing the amount of time designated for the chaplaincy work.

### *Methodology: Knowing through Practice*

Rather than begin with pre-established definitions, the research aims to uncover practical knowledge about how a chaplaincy role emerges and actually works. I decided that the best way to capture the complexity of the processes and relationships involved was to use a case study approach the purpose of which is “to explore the particularity, the uniqueness, of the single case” in order to understand its distinctiveness (Simons 2009: 3). Given that practice in this field is so diverse, this approach enabled me to focus on one instance of chaplaincy in order to undertake an in-depth study using qualitative methods. I was able to gather background information about the context as well as giving the practitioner opportunity to reflect on practice in an in-depth interview. Having gained appropriate consent, the interview was recorded, transcribed and analysed to explicate the main themes and issues implicit in practice.<sup>2</sup> Research within the church is difficult to anonymize because locations and roles are specific and may be identified. This has been made clear to the participant who is happy for the data used to be in the public domain. All interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data are entirely my own.

### *Analysis: Emerging Themes*

#### *The Emergence and Development of the Chaplaincy Role*

As a curate, Chris asked to take on the Rural Life Officer role, feeling “a distinct pull to do the rural work” and subsequently became vicar in the same benefice. As a consequence, she understands both roles as having grown or evolved and it is important to her that the parish and diocesan roles have developed in parallel. She says, “I love my work in the parishes” reflecting that, “I’m not a good floater. I like to be bedded in somewhere, I like to have deep roots and I don’t think I could do the chaplaincy work without being rooted in my parish work.” This understanding of the organic development of the roles is particularly marked

2. The research project is being undertaken as part of a Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology at Anglia Ruskin University and has ethical approval from the university.

in relation to the chaplaincy. Chris reflects, “my chaplaincy role is probably different because I have grown the role rather than being put into a role that was already there... It’s constantly evolving depending on what the current circumstance and problems are.” Along with current circumstances, Chris recognizes the personality of the chaplain as a significant determinant of the role: “It’s a unique role and everybody has their own take on it—it’s people’s personalities that evolve the role I think.” The previous post holder did not develop a chaplaincy component but Chris has developed the role as half Agricultural Chaplain and half Rural Officer.

In terms of training and support, Chris finds the Area Bishop who line-manages her to be supportive of the work. There are also national and regional meetings of Anglican Rural Officers at which ideas are exchanged. However, there has been no training for the chaplaincy work, “I think mainly because I’ve always farmed and I’ve had a faith and [pause] it’s just grown out of that... I think it would be difficult to have any training [pause] I think time to reflect.” While training is not envisaged, Chris would welcome peer support and the opportunity to reflect on practice, reflecting that, “I think a network of chaplains working on their own would be a good thing...”

One clear finding of this study concerns the origins of the chaplaincy role. The role emerged in the context of a diocesan reorganization in which the half-time Rural Officer post was abolished. Already working as a self-supporting curate, Chris was able to see this as an opportunity to take on and to develop the role in a way that was responsive to the community context. This could be seen as an entrepreneurial initiative by someone who understands the context inside out, is part of the rural community and can therefore discern the opportunities that there are for ministry within that community. That is to say, the role was not pre-established by the institutional church but came into being as a response to the pull to work with a particular community with which the individual had established relationships. Chris sees rootedness in parish work as facilitating the chaplaincy work but she is also deeply rooted in the farming and rural community. In a very real sense, her identity as a farmer and her ecclesiastical identity as an authorized minister are both equally necessary to the fulfilment of the chaplaincy role. The authority to work alongside this community is both conferred by the institutional church through the bishop’s licence and bestowed by the community itself which views her as a trusted member.

This bears out Ballard’s contention (Ballard 2009) that a key characteristic of chaplaincy is that its primary context is the world rather than the institutional church and that a defining characteristic of chaplains

is that they are “embedded” in social structures. The parochial minister works mainly in, with and from the structures and culture of the church and reaches out to the community but the chaplain, while having links with the institution, “is situated in the structures of the wider society... which provides the matrix that shapes the job” (Ballard 2009: 20).

In this case, the relationship with the institution is key. At the local level, Chris sees the parish work as a place of rootedness that enables the chaplaincy work to happen. The institution authorizes Chris in the Rural Officer role, allows her to develop the chaplaincy work as part of that and provides some line management while the parish recognizes her commitment to the chaplaincy and rural work. This means that at one level Chris is affirmed by the institution in her chaplaincy role but at another level it remains an individual initiative because the role is not strategically or contractually embedded in the organization. Chris herself confirms that, “my parishes come first, the chaplaincy role runs alongside.” The danger here is that if Chris were to leave the role, it is not clear on what basis the chaplaincy work would be accounted by the institution. This raises a question central to this study: How does chaplaincy work relate to the institutional church? On what basis might chaplaincy work be accounted by the institution without it losing its entrepreneurial freedom and its responsiveness to its situatedness in the world?

This relates directly to the question of training. The experience that Chris brings to the role and the expertise and skills that she has accrued in doing it remain unarticulated. The perception is that the role is instinctive and training would not be possible. There is no forum where unconscious or implicit knowledge can be made conscious so that it can be shared and practice can be developed intentionally.

The fact that there is no designated time for the chaplaincy work in a job description relates on one level to the organic way in which the role has developed. However, I would argue that this lack of any ecclesial profile also represents an institutional hiddenness that is characteristic of chaplaincy and points to the problematic that provides valency to this study. Increasing numbers of lay and ordained parish ministers engage with people’s lived experience through chaplaincy roles but the work is often unquantified, lacks representation within the institution and lacks an articulate theological rationale for that representation. The growth in chaplaincy work may indicate an instinctive acknowledgement of its strategic importance as an adaptive ecclesial response to the prevailing cultural context but I am not aware of any attempt to explicate the nature of that strategic importance for the mission of the church. This kind of chaplaincy in community contexts understands the point that

Percy makes: engagement with contemporary culture can no longer take place out of the privileged certainty of an inherited discourse but has to be on the basis of genuine participation within conversations and encounters (Percy 2005).

Most people with whom Chris works as a chaplain are unchurched or not regular church goers. Back in 1994 Davie drew attention to the disjunction between practice and belief as characteristic of post-war religious life in Britain. She asked the prescient question, "If churchgoing in its conventional sense is diminishing, through which institutional mechanisms can those concerned about the religious factor in contemporary society work outside of the church itself?" (Davie 1994: 107). I suggest that the development of chaplaincy roles in community contexts is one of the ways in which the institutional church is instinctively adapting to the changed post-Christendom, post-modern cultural context. Ballard asserts that, "the chaplaincy model is...an attempt to express the relevance of the gospel to every facet of life, each of which demands its particular response" (Ballard 2009: 19). This study presents one example of a role developing in order to do just that.

Following the Church of England report *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (Archbishop's Council 2004) the development of "Fresh Expressions," "emerging church" and the training of "pioneer ministers" have all been responses to the recognized need of the Church to find ways of connecting with people who are closed to institutional belonging but open to "God" and the transcendent. In this case, chaplaincy is one structure through which the Church is able to do this. In this respect, Chris's observation is pertinent: "the only chapel that I've got is the tea room at the farmer's market." As Davie observed, "Religious life...is not so much disappearing as mutating, for the sacred undoubtedly persists and will continue to do so, but in forms that may be very different from those which have gone before" (Davie 1994: 198).

The more recent research of Heelas and Woodhead bears out this observation, concluding that traditional forms of religious association are giving way to and being influenced by new forms of spirituality for which engagement with personal experience is a key component (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). Underlying this turn from religion to spirituality is the "subjectivization" of contemporary culture within which conformity to external obligations and dogma has become less important than sensitivity to inner life and well-being. Tacey (2004) relates this cultural trend to religious traditions, recognizing that they need to take account of personal experience and accept it as a potential source of revelation if they are to continue to thrive. He suggests that just as Christ



ministered in the community, binding secular lives to the sacred, so the churches need to focus on revealing the presence of God in the everyday circumstances of people's lives in the community. The tea room at the farmer's market is one such place where that can happen.

In contrast to this chaplaincy which has developed by listening to people's experience and responding accordingly, Davie suggests, albeit in a rather crude way, that parish churches now sit awkwardly in this cultural milieu, "for they continue to provide...a production rather than consumption version of religion; providing, that is, a consistent pattern of worship and pastoral care, dictated by the obligations of their role" (Davie 1994: 200). Chris's use of organic metaphors of growth to describe the development of the role is entirely apposite given that the role is characterized by not being "hide-bound in a structure" but is rather responsive to the context and "led by what's going on." Chris here may have articulated the central strength and importance of chaplaincy: in a plural society where orthodox Christian religious practice may be in decline and institutional belonging has become a matter of minority choice, chaplaincy affords ways for the Church as the people of God to be *alongside* people in their daily lives, offering, in Chris's words, the "gift of faith." Chaplains are in a position to engage with those who are not church members and to address individual and social concerns from within the particular realities of everyday life. As Chris remarked, "it's a very privileged role...it's special and it's privileged to be alongside people and...it's a gift that God gives us to be there."

#### *Chaplaincy and the Mission of the Church*

What then are the characteristics of the work? Chris regularly attends the county stock market on Mondays where she perceives herself as having "mainly a listening role," "a safe pair of ears" for people to talk to about anything. However, "It is because they know me as a farmer that they will talk; they know that I would understand." The context is known inside out and there is "an empathy or a deep understanding of the people": identification with the farming community is seen as fundamental. Chris talks about the importance of being rooted in the parish work but she is also embedded in the farming context. While the church authorizes her to be there as a minister, she is trusted by those whom she draws alongside because she is of their community, recognized as someone who understands and shares their concerns and has their wellbeing at heart. Building trust is fundamental to the work and arises out of the establishment of good relationships built on listening, empathy and understanding.

The essence of the work is repeatedly characterized as "being alongside people." Very often that means "being alongside people when they're

at their most vulnerable." Underlying this is what is termed a "just in case role." This means that having established a trusted presence, if there is a personal or communal crisis such as the outbreak of disease like Foot and Mouth, "we are there ready... It's being alongside people so that you build up a trust, so that the trust is there when you need it."

The above pastoral and practical dimensions of the role were clearly described by Chris but her instinctive response to the question, "What are the main components of your role?" was, "it's like getting hold of jelly." This points to a dimension of the role which was harder to articulate relating to the dynamics of the experience of being a chaplain. The role was compared to that of chaplains employed in major institutions such as universities: "they have set agendas—they might even have a chapel or a room or somewhere, the only chapel that I've got is the tea room at the farmer's market." The perception is that, in this role, the agenda is set by the circumstances or the person with whom the chaplain is involved: "you are there for people without having a specific agenda or role or pattern of anything." Unlike in a parish where there are set things to do, "chaplaincy, you go with the flow...you go where you're led almost."

Chaplaincy is seen as providing the freedom to engage with people in their everyday lives, to listen to their experience and concerns and to respond flexibly and appropriately because "we're not hide-bound in a structure." The chaplain therefore needs to be able to work in faith and trust with an element of not knowing: "you don't quite know what you're doing, and you don't quite know what seeds you're sowing... and you don't know what they're going to grow into." Chris sees this as one of the main challenges of this form of ministry, reflecting that, "you don't always know whether you're doing any good or not. A lot of it is hanging around listening to people and talking a little bit and it's only by the spin-offs from then you realize that your chaplaincy—all chaplaincy work I think—does have a role."

Chris was clear that her chaplaincy work is part of mission but "it depends on what you call mission." It's "a different mission to getting bums on pews... It's bringing God into people's lives at a time when they are vulnerable without ramming it down their throats...it's bringing the understanding of God into their problems by what I say or do." The possibility of engaging with people in their everyday lives depends on the building up of relationships of trust through listening and genuine encounter that takes seriously their experience as the locus of God's activity in the world.

The majority of people Chris works with as chaplain are not churchgoers so she is "very cautious" about offering to pray with or for people.

Apart from in the context of occasional offices such as funerals, theology usually remains implicit. Inspiration is gained from the words of Francis of Assisi, "Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words." Chris reflects that because she wears a clerical collar, people can expect her to be "quite theological" but most farmers, "see me as more of a practical person which gives them the security to open up." However, Chris does wear a collar and is a Christian minister, clear that "I am doing all this with God." She identified Creation as the main theological theme underpinning the work. Farmers too are working with Creation, "and when you see new life born every spring...then you can't help but be conscious of theology, of creation and most farmers would never in a million years articulate that but they're doing it...it's not something that you can put into words—but it happens."

This implicit theological dimension runs throughout the work. For example, when she goes to the farmer's market, "I have conversations there which are theological but the person that I'm talking to doesn't know that they're having a theological conversation with me." Mission in this context is characterized as an implicit gracious gift: "It's always an unspoken...gift of faith that hopefully I might be able to bring into a situation."

If the opportunity afforded by chaplaincy to come alongside people in their daily lives is seen as a gift given by God, what is the significance of this gift for the mission and ministry of the Church? Heywood (2011) points out that understandings of mission have changed over the past two decades. Mission is no longer seen as an optional activity undertaken by a particular kind of church but rather the Church's core identity is now understood as constituted as the bearer of God's mission in the world. In this understanding, the very nature of God is missionary: the Father sending the Son into the world and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit. This is the *missio Dei* and in the Gospel of John, Jesus entrusts the mission of God to the community he gathered around himself with the words, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20.21). Bosch similarly describes mission as, "the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world" (Bosch 1992: 519). The missionary God sends the church into the world in order to establish the Kingdom. This is the goal of mission and, as Heywood remarks, "Rather than following a universally applicable blueprint, the community is called to discern the shape of God's mission for each place and time and to allow its own life constantly to be renewed by the Holy Spirit so as to fulfil that mission" (Heywood 2011: 113). As understandings of mission have changed, so the key questions about ministry have changed too. No longer is it, "How is the church to

be governed? Today, the relevant question is: How is the church to serve the mission of God?" (Heywood 2011: 13).

I suggest that the understanding of mission that Chris seeks to articulate in her chaplaincy practice relates directly to this doctrine of the *missio Dei* and to an understanding of the church as the servant of God's mission in the world in order that the Kingdom of God may flourish. This begins with the need to discern the shape of God's mission in this particular context and with the assumption that the Holy Spirit is always and everywhere at work in people's lives or, as Chris puts it, "because they're working with creation all the time they are working with God but they don't realize that they're doing it." As a church representative, Chris represents her work as incarnating the good news of God's love for the sake of the world although that is rarely made explicit. Discerning what God's mission might be in this place demands an attitude of humility, a drawing alongside people to listen to what is going on in their lives and in their community. This builds the deep relational foundations of trust that enable people to talk to Chris about their experience. This is the starting point for discerning what God might be doing in the world and how the chaplain, as representative of the church, can serve that mission. Mission here is understood not as getting people to come to church but as collaboration with God's work in the world.

The findings suggest that, due to its characteristic location in social structures and its capacity to be "led by what's going on," chaplaincy may be ideally suited to the discernment and service of the mission of God. Its approach to engagement with particular contexts and contemporary culture exemplifies what Steddon terms "guest" in contrast to "host" theology. Guest theology asks, "Please may I come to your place and be part of what you do?" while host theology engages in order to say, "Come to our place and do as we do" (Steddon 2010: 11–12). If contemporary culture has set an ecclesiological imperative to renegotiate the relationship between the "church" and the "world" then it appears that chaplaincy is at the forefront of the renegotiation.

Spencer (2007) characterizes mission within post-modernity as "finding hope in local communities." Referring to Bonhoeffer and to Donovan's missionary strategy with the Masai (Donovan 1978), he states, "The common theme found in Bonhoeffer and Donovan is of the church laying aside its power and wealth and becoming vulnerable to the local community, listening before witnessing, changing and being changed by the encounter" (Spencer 2007: 175). The opportunity for authentic witness often occurs through genuine encounter and dialogue. In this paradigm, Christian witness is expressed through Christians offering themselves in service to local communities, "so that they may give

and receive hospitality and care and so that genuine dialogue and witness may take place" (Spencer 2007: 180). The important components of mission in this postmodern context are: the willingness to engage with people's lived experience and to listen before witnessing, humility, mutuality, encounter, dialogue and depth of discipleship. Of course, the willingness to engage in genuine dialogue and listening implies the need to risk genuine openness to mutual learning and transformation. In Heywood's terms, the chaplain is not there "to uphold the church's institutional presence" but "as a sign of the social, moral and even spiritual significance" of the life of a particular community. He suggests that when engagement is on this basis, what is chiefly valued about the minister's presence is not what sets them apart but what brings them alongside: "A shared humanity, vulnerability, a willingness to share the struggle to explore the meaning of the mundane activities through which social life is maintained, perhaps to offer the hope of a better world" (Heywood 2011: 14).

It is interesting to see that this missiological approach is advocated in a recent article in the *Church Times* entitled "Centred on Service to the World" (Hollis 2011). Hollis calls for an ecclesiology that can accommodate the call to serve the mission of God in the world. He asserts that the Church's primary vocation is to make love "real in purposeful action in the world...so that those outside [the Church] reach their full manhood and womanhood in body, mind and spirit, individually and socially... Worship may inspire its actions but the vocation of the Church is in the world."

### *Conclusion: The Need for Further Exploration*

This single case study has articulated some of the significant themes and issues relating to the development of a chaplaincy role in a rural context. It set out to explore: how one chaplaincy role emerged and developed, the distinctiveness of the role, what the significance of the recent growth in chaplaincy roles might be and how chaplaincy relates to the mission of the church.

The study shows that the role emerged as a result of the personal initiative and vision of the participant who was able to spot the opportunity for developing chaplaincy. The role was developed by building on relationships of trust within a community known from the inside out and with which the chaplain identifies as a farmer. The chaplaincy work is embedded in the social structures of the farming community and the participant's solidarity with that community is as much her source of authority in the work as is her ecclesiastical authorization for the work.

Structural opportunity, personal vision and strong understanding and empathy with the community involved have been instrumental in the development of the role. However, the role remains hidden in the context of the institutional narrative about ministry in that there is no time officially designated for the work and no training either available or envisaged relevant.

The distinctiveness of the role is described in terms of its embeddedness in social rather than ecclesiastical structures; its lack of structure and its consequent capacity to be flexible in its response to circumstances; its focus on engagement with the everyday reality of people's lives. The chaplaincy work begins where people are, listening to their experience and seeking to discern where God is at work in the world. This mode of ecclesial engagement with the contemporary cultural context may represent one significant way in which the Church is adapting to the contemporary turn from religion to spirituality and the subjectivization of culture. The study suggests that chaplaincy is the Church living out its vocation in the world as part of the sending of God.

This points to the significance of chaplaincy today within the mission of the whole church of God. If the church has been sent to serve the *missio Dei* by working with the world for the flourishing of the kingdom then chaplains who are able to come alongside people in their daily lives have a central role to play. This study supports the view that chaplaincy can be seen as one way of living church in the world, of being alongside and bringing hope and the gift of faith to many who are not open to institutional belonging but do recognize the transcendent dimension of life. In these terms, chaplaincy does indeed have its own integrity as a form of ministry within the mission of the church.

However, this is just one case study of the emergence of a chaplaincy role in one particular context which by no means represents a comprehensive description of the nature and scope of chaplaincy. The particular understanding of chaplaincy described by the participant has been shaped in the context of an extensive involvement in wider rural issues as Diocesan Rural Officer and parish priest. A chaplaincy role in another rural context may be described very differently. This pinpoints the difficulty in talking about emergent chaplaincy roles and why I have taken a case study approach. Valuable as such insights are, rather than pursuing the approach taken by Legood (1999) and Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011) of presenting practitioner reflections, this case study approach starts to problematize the use of the term "chaplaincy" itself. It seeks to address the fact that new chaplaincy roles are emerging but there is little or no delineation of what chaplaincy is. The best way to begin to do this is through an approach which does not start with definitions but seeks

to present a rich description of emerging practice as the basis for analysis and interpretation.

The study generates questions and the need for further empirical research in different contexts: questions of theology, vision and strategy, training and resources and the relationship of chaplaincy with the institutional church. The next task is to undertake further studies in comparative urban and semi-urban contexts in order to provide fuller evidence of how chaplaincy roles develop, are understood and sustained in different contexts. The hope is that the findings from further case studies will locate the conclusions drawn from this study in a wider context and thus contribute more substantially to the description of the integrity of chaplaincy as a form of ministry and to the articulation of its place within the mission of the church as a significant contemporary way of living church in the world.

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