First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by
Christopher A. Bassett

Lynchburg, Virginia
July 2021
Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Dr. Brian L. Bohlman, DMIN
Mentor Name &Title

Dr. Mark A. Plaza, DMIN
Reader Name &Title
Police and fire chaplains comprise an emerging ministry profession that is underrepresented in academic study. This thesis project addresses the problem of support structure inadequacies among First Responder Chaplains (FRCs) that create conditions that lead to burnout. The study examines their often-problematic connections to churches, denominations, and other endorsing agencies (sending sources). The purpose of the project is to assess those connections and provide remediation for any inadequacies. The thesis project examines Chaplaincy Organizational Agencies (COAs) and develops solutions for FRCs to build better initial and ongoing relationships with their sending sources. The thesis suggests that chaplains who are properly affirmed, supported, and sent into the mission field are less likely to suffer from the effects of isolation and therefore should experience lower rates of burnout.

This study used the Francis Burnout Inventory as a quantitative tool to assess initial and follow-up burnout in twenty-seven FRC participants. The researcher compared responses between both iterations of the FBI to gauge the success of intervention methods. The researcher held qualitative interviews with each FRC and separate meetings with eleven sending source representatives and their FRCs to discuss solutions for building stronger relationships. The researcher used two focus groups with both the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy Executive Board (an FR chaplaincy COA) and one composed of several FRCs. The researcher sought concluding thoughts from participants with a final survey. The researcher used five hypotheses to assess the results of the study, offering several suggestions to build supportive relationships and reduce burnout in FRCs.

Keywords: Burnout, First Responder, Police, Firefighter, Francis Burnout Inventory
Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
  Ministry Context .................................................................................................................. 2
    Demographic Information ................................................................................................. 2
    Chaplaincy In General ....................................................................................................... 4
    First Responder Chaplain Ministry Context ................................................................. 8
  Problem Presented ............................................................................................................. 12
  Purpose Statement ............................................................................................................ 15
  Basic Assumptions ........................................................................................................... 16
  Definitions ....................................................................................................................... 18
  Limitations ....................................................................................................................... 20
  Delimitations .................................................................................................................... 22
  Thesis Statement ............................................................................................................. 23

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework ......................................................................................... 25
  Literature Review ............................................................................................................. 25
    First Responder Chaplaincy In General ......................................................................... 26
      Parish Clergy and Chaplains ....................................................................................... 27
      The Unique Role of the FR Chaplain ........................................................................ 28
    Burnout In General ....................................................................................................... 30
      Burnout Among Clergy ............................................................................................... 31
      Social Support – Individual Support Structures ....................................................... 34
      Social Support – Organizational Support Structures ................................................. 38
      Guarding Against Clergy Burnout ............................................................................. 40
  Theological Foundations ................................................................................................. 42
    Ancient Foundations of Chaplaincy: The Priesthood and the Military ......................... 45
    Ancient Foundations of Chaplaincy: Commissioning .................................................. 47
    The New Testament and Modern Chaplaincy ............................................................... 50
  Theoretical Foundations ................................................................................................ 59
    The Church as a Sending Source .................................................................................. 59
    Sense of Calling and Support Structures ..................................................................... 60
    The Specific Call to FR Chaplaincy ............................................................................. 61
    The Francis Burnout Inventory ..................................................................................... 62
    Qualitative Interviews, Focus Groups, and Surveys ..................................................... 64

Chapter 3: Methodology ........................................................................................................ 67
  Intervention Design ....................................................................................................... 68
    Purpose and Objective ................................................................................................. 69
    Step-by-Step Tasks ....................................................................................................... 71
    Participant Selection and Recruitment ........................................................................ 72
    Phase 1 ....................................................................................................................... 73
      Francis Burnout Inventory and Questionnaire ......................................................... 73
      FRC Interviews ....................................................................................................... 75
      TPCC Board Focus Group ....................................................................................... 77
    Phase 2 ..................................................................................................................... 78
Hypothesis 5 ........................................................................................................173
Other Conclusions and Research Suggestions ..................................................176

IRB Approval Letter ............................................................................................181
IRB Modification Letter .....................................................................................182
Bibliography ........................................................................................................183
Appendix A.1: In-Person FBI Introduction ..........................................................189
Appendix A.2: Chaplain Participant Consent Form .............................................190
Appendix A.3: Chaplain Recruitment Email .......................................................194
Appendix A.4: TPCC Board Participation Consent Form .....................................195
Appendix A.5: Sending Source Consent Form ....................................................199
Appendix A.6: Second Chaplain Recruitment Email .........................................203
Appendix B.1: Francis Burnout Inventory ............................................................204
Appendix B.2: Demographic Questionnaire .......................................................204
Appendix C.1: First Interviews, Chaplain Participants .......................................206
Appendix C.2: Board of Directors Focus Group ................................................207
Appendix D.1: Sending Source Recruitment Email ............................................208
Appendix D.2: Sending Source Interviews .........................................................209
Appendix D.3: Solutions Focus Group .................................................................211
Appendix D.4: Solutions Focus Group Quest. for Chaplain Candidates and Sending Sources ......................................................................................212
Appendix D.5: TPCC Ecclesiastical Endorsement .............................................216
Appendix E.1: Sending Source Questionnaire (Email) .......................................217
Appendix E.2: Final Board of Directors Focus Group .......................................218
Appendix E.3: Chaplain Second FBI/Questionnaire Introduction (Email) ..........219
Appendix E.4: Second FBI/Final Survey .............................................................220
Appendix F: Google Docs Additional Statistical Results – Baseline FBI/Questionnaire ....................................................................................222
Tables

1.1  Baseline FBI Burnout Scores ................................................................. 103
1.2  Final FBI Burnout Scores ................................................................. 103
Illustrations

Figures

4. Bassett, C., “FRC Quest., Relationship w/Local Church,” Google Docs 104
34. Bassett, C., “Final FBI, Understand,” Google Docs 111
41. Bassett, C., “Baseline FBI, Appreciated,” Google Docs 113
42. Bassett, C., “Final FBI, Appreciated,” Google Docs 113
43. Bassett, C., “Baseline FBI, Glad,” Google Docs 113
44. Bassett, C., “Final FBI, Glad,” Google Docs 113
| 45. | Bassett, C., “Baseline FBI, Purpose and Meaning,” *Google Docs* | 113 |
| 46. | Bassett, C., “Final FBI, Purpose and Meaning,” *Google Docs* | 113 |
Abbreviations

COA Chaplaincy Organizational Agencies

DMIN Doctor of Ministry

DP Depersonalization

EE Emotional Exhaustion

FBI Francis Burnout Inventory

FF Firefighter

FFC Federation of Fire Chaplains

FR/FRC First Responder/First Responder Chaplain

ICPC International Conference of Police Chaplains

LEO Law Enforcement Officer

LUSOD Liberty University School of Divinity

MBI Maslach Burnout Inventory

PA Personal Accomplishment

PFCTA Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy

SEEM Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry

SIMS Satisfaction in Ministry Scale

STS Secondary Traumatic Stress

TPCC Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
Chapter 1

Introduction

Various forms of what we now call chaplaincy have been in existence since the development of militaries and other collective social structures. In its most basic form, chaplaincy is simply the addition of religious representatives to formal functions of state and society such as militaries, early rulers’ courts, hospitals, prisons, first responder agencies, disaster relief agencies, schools, and other social groups. The primary goals of most forms of chaplaincy are religious advisement, the performance of religious rituals, and provision of comfort and counsel to those within the social or professional structure within which the priestly element is located. This action research project focuses upon Christians who serve in modern chaplaincy ministries to the primary First Responder (FR) groups in the United States, police officers and firefighters.

Historical Christian chaplaincy derives its name from the Latin capella, meaning “cape.” The name derives from the legend of Saint Martin of Tours, who, serving as a Roman cavalry officer in the 4th Century A.D., rode through a village and came upon a poorly clothed peasant suffering from exposure to the cold. Saint Martin took off his expensive officer’s cape and cut it in two, offering one half to the peasant. Martin later left the military and became a monk, and eventually, the Bishop of Tours.1 The story of Martin and the peasant persisted after his death, and early Christian priests took on the moniker “chaplain” as they began serving in bishoprics and kings’ courts as personal advisory staff to royal families and as keepers of relics of deceased saints. Chaplains later filled roles within militaries, hospitals, and other socio-religious functions, eventually taking on the positions one might find them today.

---

1 “Life of St. Martin of Tours” Saint Martin of Tours, https://www.stmoftours.org/Life-of-St. As of 07-19-2021, the page owner was redesigning the website and the page was temporarily taken down.
Chaplains presently serve in a wide variety of ministry services. This chapter discusses police and fire chaplaincy and the context in which they minister. Next, it covers the essential problem statement, offers the research project’s purpose, and lays out its thesis. Next, it presents the basis for supporting First Responder Chaplains (FRCs) by linking them more closely to their religious support structures, what the author has defined as their “sending sources” – churches, denominations, and endorsing agencies – to bolster their sacred, ministerial, and functional supports. While ongoing support from their sending sources is one ideal outcome of this study, the primary goal is to develop various means by which FRCs may gain better support from their sending sources at the outset of their ministry. Chapter 1 also lays out the basic assumptions made by the author, helpful definitions, and the study’s limitations and delimitations.

Ministry Context

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, as of 2016, there were more than 12,000 local police agencies in the United States. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) counted 29,705 local fire departments in the nation. Presently, there are no reliable statistics available for the number of chaplains serving police or fire agencies in the United States, as the lack of centralized leadership and reporting makes such an enumeration nearly impossible. This study will focus primarily on the FRCs of the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy (TPCC), a non-profit organization established in 1971 that organizes, trains, and facilitates chaplaincy ministry.

---


for almost all police and fire agencies in Pierce County, Washington, including the city of Tacoma. The mostly volunteer chaplains of TPCC include a wide array of denominational and non-denominational chaplains, all of the Christian faith. TPCC runs the Police and Fire Chaplain Training Academy (PFCTA), which has graduated over 800 chaplains since its inception in 2002. This study also samples the past graduates of the PFCTA and those presently ministering as FRCs within the TPCC to broaden the geographic sample of chaplains.

Demographic Information

TPPC’s demographic includes fifty-four chaplains, sixteen of whom are female, two are African American, one is Asian, and one is Hispanic.\(^4\) While the agency is well-represented among white males, it is moderately represented among females and has low representation among African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. It has no representation among other ethnicities. Despite the noted ethnic and gender makeup of TPCC, chaplains often serve one agency. Therefore, chaplaincy representation for Tacoma, e.g., may include both of TPCC’s African American chaplains, leaving no representation in a neighboring city, such as Lakewood, which also has a significant African American population. However, TPCC permits and encourages “mutual aid” among agencies which means that a chaplain or agency may call upon chaplains of other agencies to assist in their city or district, should the need arise. For example, there is one Hispanic, Spanish-speaking chaplain that agencies may call to assist Spanish-speaking families in another area of the county. Police and fire departments also have the capacity to provide these language and cultural services via secular means but without the

\(^4\) With the modern tendency to identify persons according to multiple ethnicities it should be noted that this particular demographic breakdown may not include those identifying as partially Hispanic or African American.
religious support component required at times when they would typically call upon a chaplain. Additionally, chaplains or FR agencies may request local ministers to help in cases where long-term assistance, interpretation, religious accommodation, or other needs are in demand.

The racial demographic of Pierce County is quite diverse. U.S. Census Bureau demographics for Pierce County in 2016 showed the following racial makeup: 65.7% white (not Asian or Latino), 74.3% white alone, 11.4% Hispanic or Latino, 7.7% black or African American alone, 7.4% two or more races, 7.1% Asian alone, and 1.8% each native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone or American Indian or Alaska Native alone. 35.8% of Pierce County residents identify themselves as religious, breaking down into the following categories: 0.1% affiliate with Islam, 1.7% of “Eastern” faith, 0.1% Jewish, 4.3% Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), and 25.4% Christian. The denominational breakdown includes 2.3% Baptist, 0.3% Episcopalian, 9% Catholic, 2.4% Lutheran, 1.0 % Methodist, 4.7% Pentecostal, 1.4% Presbyterian, and 8.4% non-denominational or other Christian denomination. There are no current statistics pertaining to the religious faith affiliations of police officers and firefighters in Pierce County.

Chaplaincy in General

Chaplaincy is frequently considered a calling within a call. Traditional pastoral ministry is often the training ground for this call. In military, the Veterans Administration, and hospital

---


6 “Religion in Pierce County, Washington,” Best Places, https://www.bestplaces.net/religion/county/washington/pierce. This study did not give a further definition of white, of Hispanic or Latino, or of black and African American, and thus did not provide a basis for distinction between the ethnicities, which may be a result of individual identification rather than a significant ethnic differentiation. It can be assumed that the distinction between black and African American may relate to black, non-African and African, non-African respondents. I have utilized the forms of ethnicity as presented therein.
settings, the requirement to become a chaplain includes a denominational ordination and endorsement. Endorsement is a specific recognition by an ecclesiastical vetting agency that may be part of or separate from a denomination that affirms a minister’s calling to a particular group outside the church. Further, secular organizations like the military require two years of ministry in a pastoral role in the local church, in addition to any denominational requirements. Many denominations share these requirements. For instance, the Assemblies of God endorses chaplains for emergency services, military, health care, and specialized ministries. Their specialized ministries include “airports, racetracks, ski mountaintops, rescue missions, rodeos, motorcycle rallies, schools, and truck stops.” However, only their healthcare, prison, and military chaplaincies require two years of ministry experience. Their other chaplaincy ministries have various, lesser denominational requirements, in addition to those that meet the qualifications of the receiving organization. Likewise, the Southern Baptist Convention has a two-year pastoral ministry requirement for healthcare, prison, and military chaplaincies, while requiring mere affiliation with the SBC for one year and membership in good standing with an SBC church for six months for other chaplaincy ministries. Thus, to meet the standards for a chaplaincy position, chaplains must often demonstrate a call to ministry to their denomination, receive a special endorsement for work outside of the church setting, and meet the requirements of the organization they wish to serve.

The high church setting for chaplaincy training and endorsement may be far more complicated, as in the United Methodist Church (UMC), where multiple levels of requirements may be present for any of their various chaplaincy ministries. For example, one must be a UMC

---


Elder to qualify for military chaplaincy. However, one may become a chaplain for less formal chaplaincy roles as a Deacon. Elders must not only meet the two-year pastoral ministry requirement in a local UMC parish but they may also be required to complete Clinical Pastoral Education and gain affiliation with a professional organization such as the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Industrial chaplaincy qualification is also quite complicated, requiring those chaplains in the prison, healthcare, and military settings to be priests (a post only available to males), while other settings may be open to non-clergy (many of which are open to females). However, each of their chaplaincy ministries require both a graduate degree and Clinical Pastoral Education. The differences between denominational requirements are confusing enough. However, one must add to this the understanding that, while some denominations require full ordination to gain endorsement as a chaplain, even in FR chaplaincy, some – especially among independent or non-denominational churches – view FRCs as lay-ministers and do not require anything more than a local church pastor’s approval. FR agencies have yet to universally codify ordination or educational requirements as necessary for their chaplains in the same way healthcare, military, or correctional institutions have.

Chaplaincy is a unique brand of ministry that is both strengthened by and suffers from the diversity and complexity of its religious sending sources. There are hundreds of denominational and independent licensing, endorsing, and local church sending agencies that feed into hospital, business, prison, institutional, military, and FR chaplaincies, serving thousands of private and government sector groups and agencies across the United States. No one Christian chaplain

---


represents all denominations in the area in which he or she serves, much less all religions. Therefore, chaplains prepare to serve a diverse population knowing that they may be accepted or rejected as ministers by those to whom they offer their ministrations. They may be called upon to perform specific ministerial duties as approved by their endorsing agency, or they may need to call in another religious representative who can best serve the needs of those they meet on a callout, in a hospital room, or in the normal course of everyday ministry.

Chaplains in hospitals, prisons, the military, VA, and other more formal settings must go through a rigorous licensing and endorsing process and are typically ordained and licensed by specific religious organizations that provide guidance, oversight, initial and ongoing training, and ecclesiastical endorsement to conduct their ministries in the public square. Endorsing agencies often have advanced educational requirements, such as a master’s degree or Clinical Pastoral Education, for chaplains wishing to conduct ministry in these institutions. However, endorsers often require less formal training of many chaplains serving in various fields like disaster relief, community organizations, fraternal organizations, and police and fire agencies. The former most often require denominational affiliation, while the latter may or may not have either denominational affiliation or formal recognition from a local church. Presently, academic studies related to chaplaincy focus almost exclusively upon healthcare, VA, military, and prison chaplains. The author found no academic research directed specifically toward FRC ministry. No academic books or source materials appear to exist that tailor their material to FRCs, although many such non-academic books have begun to emerge that discuss FRC ministry to Firefighters (FFs) and Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs).
First Responder Chaplain Ministry Setting

FRCs are sometimes well-trained, formally educated, and ministerially licensed chaplains. Often, however, they are ad hoc representatives of organizations that do not have formally trained chaplains available to them. Some police and fire agencies rely on a pool of local religious leaders strictly for callout ministry needs.\(^{11}\) As discussed above, some chaplains come in with a high level of training and qualification. However, since there are no broadly accepted standards for chaplaincy at the local levels for police and fire agencies, their training may consist only of the ministry training they gained to become pastors and whatever job-specific training the FR agencies they serve may provide. Departmental needs for a chaplain to respond to callouts often necessitate these lessened requirements. However, FRCs exist not only for such callout ministry but to serve the professional personnel of police and fire agencies. The unique stressors that police officers and firefighters undergo are well-documented and commonly understood.\(^{12}\) Both professions frequently deal with death, mortal danger to themselves or the citizens they serve, the loss of fellow officers or firefighters in the line of duty, and a myriad of other human traumas too vast to be listed here. FRs represent a variety of religions and non-religious philosophies within their ranks. The combination of high stress, varied shift work, mandatory overtime, and sheer exhaustion often limit police officers’ and firefighters’ access to

\(^{11}\) A “callout” is typically made when department personnel encounter a scene where they recognize a need for ministerial attention, such as suicides, homicides, fatal auto collisions, or where a department member or citizen is hospitalized for illness or injury.

their chosen religious practices and worship services. Bringing faith and faith practices to FRs is one way chaplains serve the needs of their community beyond simply responding to emergency calls. They also provide a confidential source of counsel to whom all FRs may turn to defuse or debrief after traumatic incidents or to find guidance when facing life’s everyday trials.

Further limiting their access to the faith-based community is how the FRs’ occupation shapes who they are and how Christians often perceive them. This impacts how the church at large receives FRCs, as well. Many churches are largely ignorant of the existence of chaplaincy ministries, while others are acquainted with it only in the context of the military, prisons, and hospitals. Many are unaware that chaplains serve in community settings like police and fire departments, casinos, airports, and racetracks, among many other locations one would not expect to find a minister of God. There is often an air of discomfort in the church with such secular institutions, some of which Christians see as “no-go zones,” and an equal discomfort with the idea of sending Christian ministers into those places.\(^\text{13}\) George Barna identified a link that shows, despite this feeling in the church that certain places are taboo for Christians, there is a growing number of people who practice their faith outside of the institutional church, who claim to have an individual relationship with Jesus over and against His church, and who prefer to discuss issues of faith within the context of personal relationships apart from religious events or institutions.\(^\text{14}\)

In other words, chaplains are often seen as less than ministers, going places where Christian sensitivities would prefer that they not go and engaging with people in secular settings in a covert way that is disturbing to many Christians. Indeed, as this study argues, FRCs are both


pastors of Christians in the First Responder workplace and missionaries engaging their local communities. They must be prepared for the secular nature of their (mostly volunteer) employment while shining the light of Jesus Christ in dark places where few Christians venture – and even so, only when those dark places come crashing into their world through the death of a loved one, a traumatic event, or a criminal act. FRCs might find themselves one day conducting a Bible study for believing police officers and, the next, find themselves riding along with an atheist who does not want to discuss religion. They might have a lively religious conversation in the firehouse one moment and, the next, become the confidant of a Muslim firefighter who just needs someone to listen to her struggles. They must walk the fine line between being seen as religious figures who do not overtly proselytize, on the one hand, and comforters who bring a sense of the holy into a diverse gathering of LEOs mourning the loss of a fellow officer in the line of duty, on the other. People expect them to be spiritual, often without appearing too religious. This ministry of presence creates opportunities for reaching First Responders where no pastor or parishioner may ever find them.

Lastly, this line of ministry exposes chaplains to trauma that few ministers must face, except perhaps tertiarily when counseling victims of trauma. The FRC is engaged in genuinely incarnate ministry, becoming one with those on the thin blue or red lines yet remaining separated by degrees so that she may minister to their anguish when the job, life, or the next call goes terribly wrong. The FRC responds to a tragic scene alongside the firefighter to see the carnage long passed before pastors share their homilies over the grave. They see the sights, smell the smells, experience the adrenaline highs and lows, and yet are still expected to remain the physically present reminder of the One they carry who calmed the storm, raised the dead, and promised that in the end, He would wipe away every tear. They bear this burden alone if they do
not find a resource in the church – the same church that is not sure they are genuinely pastors or missionaries in the first place. They must identify with the secular world to bring God closer to it, and they must remain separate enough to draw both the unbelieving and believing first responders closer to His presence. They often wear the same uniform, participate in the same training, respond to the same calls, and endure the same traumatic stresses, yet they also need a source from which to draw strength. This study proposes that to carry out such a mission, as both pastor and missionary, the prayers, affirmations, ministrations, and material supports of the church must play a part in sending them into the unique mission field of the precincts and firehouses to shepherd sheep and leave the ninety-nine to rescue the one.\footnote{Bobby L. Trihub et al., “Denominational Support for Clergy Mental Health” Journal of Psychology and Theology 38, no. 2 (Summer, 2010): 102, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F6027979477%3FAccountID%3D12085. The authors are making a similar point from a psychological perspective, asserting that denominations should provide access to mental health services for their pastors to improve not only the pastor’s health but church health as well.}

The author of this study is part of TPCC, a military and police chaplain, and a church pastor, having enjoyed each of these ministries, in whole or in part, for over twenty-two years. His unique insight into the FRC culture is further buttressed by his fifteen years as a sheriff’s deputy, two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan as a U.S. Army Chaplain, military relief effort responses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans and the Oso landslide event in Washington State, and teaching as the primary trainer of suicide intervention and prevention at the PFCTA. He has lived on both sides of the thin blue line, worked professionally together with firefighters, and experienced their exhilarations, their burnout, their post-traumatic stress, their grief in loss, and his personal pain of feeling that his fellow pastors saw him as a lesser minister – if a minister at all. He hopes that this study will be the genesis of research into this vital area of evangelistic effort to First Responders by creating supporting mechanisms that will serve to
validate, affirm, and continually bolster the ministry of FRCs. The author is thankful to TPCC for opening their arms to this research, even as their board has recently begun to wrestle with the same concern over chaplain burnout, affirming the need for this study. He is grateful they willingly provided access to their chaplains and the contact information of those chaplains who have attended their academy and are now serving in various parts of the country as FRCs.

**Problem Presented**

As a US Army Reserve Chaplain who entered into chaplaincy after significant education, training, and denominational vetting, the author became a Law Enforcement Chaplain for a city police department and an instructor for the PFCTA through a very structured academic and ecclesiastical route that provided him with many advantageous support structures. While teaching at the PFCTA, he started informally polling the twenty-five to thirty Chaplains in each class concerning whether or not their churches and ministry organizations recognized and supported their ministry and treated them as pastors in their own right. He found that one quarter to one half of the Chaplains in each class had not received affirmation for their ministry, had little to no pastoral oversight, and were not recognized by their home congregations as ministers supported or sent by the church. They expressed a sense of deep sorrow with this lack of ministerial acceptance and a lack of confidence in their calling and qualification to fulfill what amounts to a pastoral and missionary role to police, firefighters, and other first responders in their communities. In addition, they often lacked a peer support network, church oversight, pastoral mentoring, or ecclesiastical endorsement. They shared that they perceived ministerial isolation and alienation from support structures that left them in danger of burnout and ministry frustration. They further expressed a sense of inadequacy to fulfill their calling. The problem is
that a lack of support structures leads some FRCs to experience frustration, isolation, and ultimately burnout in their ministries.

TPCC is a unique and innovative organization that developed over the last fifty years what few other regions have – a chaplaincy support structure developed to recruit, vet, place, train, and support FRCs within contracted police and fire agencies throughout Pierce County, Washington. King County Chaplaincy and Charteris are two other chaplaincy organizational agencies (COAs) in the county to the north of TPCC, both created to fulfill the same role. There are several such organizations throughout the rest of the states, but TPCC is the perhaps most well-established group and remains the standard for the nascent field of budding FR COAs. Through TPCC, chaplains find fellowship, a place to debrief through their own traumatic experiences, professional training, and some material and moral support. TPCC also liaisons with police and fire agencies to help them understand and better utilize their chaplains. TPCC does not ordain, license, endorse, or otherwise provide ecclesiastical structure over or affirmation of the ministries of their tenant chaplains. They are but one of many chaplaincy support structures that FRCs must enlist to ensure long, successful ministries. Even as such a support structure, TPCC Director Ben Harris notes that fewer than 10% of TPCC chaplains’ sending sources understand TPCC’s mission and functions and often see TPCC as a surrogate for their support and spiritual oversight. Almost all TPCC chaplains have individual churches as their sending source, yet many do not have strong relationships with the boards or pastors who endorsed their chaplain for FR chaplaincy.¹⁶

As ministers to First Responders, chaplains may find themselves performing various ministerial functions such as pastoral counseling, bible studies, baptisms, christenings, prayers, prayers,

¹⁶ Ben Harris, interview by author, City of Tacoma, September 28, 2020.
weddings, and funerals. As previously noted, they may also find themselves ministering to Muslims, atheists, pagans, Jews, Hindus, and people of no religious belief at all. They function at times as pastors and at times as missionaries. They work under the constraints of laws that prohibit them from unwanted proselytization while endeavoring to represent Jesus in whatever ways their agencies and the individual officers and firefighters permit. The calling to become a chaplain requires the church’s recognition to help FRCs launch a successful ministry and sustain it with ongoing support. Chaplains who must make the journey without having the blessing of prayer and the laying on of hands, commissioning, ordination, or licensing, along with the commitment of a church body to pray for and materially support them, are vulnerable to feelings of isolation and doubt. This lack of sending source support can cripple their ministry and open them up to early burnout. Harris offered two goals that TPCC has that will help shore up this problem:

1) Develop a more comprehensive process of preparing new FRCs and linking them to their sending sources such that churches endorsing chaplains understand their role and that of TPCC in supporting the chaplains.
2) Establish an ongoing connection between TPCC, the FRC, and the church so that there are better lines of communication to support FRCs and prevent or identify problems up front to help them avoid burnout and remain in ministry.17

Given the unique aspects of this ministry, which often goes unrecognized by the church at large, and the need for a better initial structural support for FRCs, this study seeks solutions to the support gap between FRCs and their sending sources.

---

17 Harris, interview.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research thesis is to assess and remediate the adequacy of sending source support structures among FRCs. This thesis will provide a bird’s eye view of chaplains presently engaged in FR chaplaincy in law enforcement, firefighter, and other related crisis response chaplain communities. It will utilize the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI), with its dual components of the Satisfaction In Ministry Scale (SIMS) and the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM), to gauge FRC levels of Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). It will also utilize personal interviews to gain insight into successful support structures – particularly those church structures that ordain, endorse, affirm, and provide mentorship to chaplains – and considerations for improving those inadequate structural connections. Finally, it will help create and assess an assessment tool for these ministry-sending and chaplaincy organizations and develop other connective support structure suggestions for strengthening FRC connections to those organizations. The goal of creating better connections between the FRC and their sending source is to help them discover ecclesiastical affirmation and oversight, material resources, training resources, and ongoing structural support for their ministry. The result of these connections should be to reduce the perception of isolation and remediate the onset of possible burnout symptoms in these sending source connections. Additional problems related to FRC ministry may create a sense of isolation and symptoms of burnout that this thesis will not address. Future researchers should examine these to bolster resilience in this rising ministry profession.

This study will also survey a sample of endorsing agencies, denominations, and local churches regarding their processes for affirming and their understanding of FRC ministries. As noted, some of these sending sources already have measures in place to support FRCs, while
many do not. The possibility exists that many of the FRCs have not sought out possible sources of support from within their faith traditions. In the informal polling that the author conducted, a few respondents indicated that they were not connected to their local churches or denominations for their ministry efforts or had not sought endorsement or licensing from an endorsing or licensing agent. Some indicated that the educational or other requirements they encountered were prohibitive due to their present education level or ministry experience. Other FRCs indicated that their sending source simply did not seem to respond to their ministry favorably, though it was unclear whether this was because of the sending agency’s understanding of the ministry or the qualifications of the FRC. Another goal of this research project is to clarify, for both the sending sources and the FRCs, the nature of the FRC ministry seeking support, the possible organic or alternative sources available to the FRC, and the sending source’s requirements for endorsement and support. Once again, this study aims to help create connections that remediate, at least in part, the sense of isolation and resultant ministry stressors that tend to produce symptoms of burnout.18

**Basic Assumptions**

The most basic assumption made in this action research project is that the informal polling performed by the author closely approximates the level of support among FRCs in the broader demographic. It has been his experience that this may be a fair, if rough, estimation of the low support often received by FRCs from their sending sources to their ministries. Harris’ assertion regarding TPCC FRCs’ sending sources bolsters this assumption. Further, this study

assumes that most denominations, churches, and endorsers have some internal process for formally affirming the ministers of their organizations and the ministries in which their adherents engage. Therefore, it may well create, in a broad theological sense, methods and tools to help these supporting agencies provide a foundational ecclesial affirmation for FRCs. While not all ministry endeavors require formal recognition from the church, the author believes that FR chaplaincy is progressively attaining a level of professionalism that necessitates the kind of spiritual appointment best conferred by and the prerogative of the church.

This study assumes similarities between FRCs as ministers and other types of ministers, such as hospital chaplains and parish clergy. The author found no studies that directly address the unique nature of FRC ministry, much less in the light of the thesis herein proposed. A good portion of the ministry that FRCs conduct is similar to hospital chaplaincy and parish ministry. However, it also includes more significant exposure to traumatic events, more initiative-driven ministry contacts, and free-range, local missionary-style networking within the community. Based upon that assumption, this study will use standard assessment tools for general ministry contexts. The author’s approach to this problem should be improved upon by future researchers interested in furthering this area of study.

The author is committed to the religious freedom of denominations, churches, and endorsing agencies to set the standards, rituals, and requirements for conferring ministry titles and roles according to their theological traditions. This study does not attempt to create new forms but rather develop better connections for support already inherent within the existing structures and educate those structures on the ministries in which their resident chaplains engage. This study will protect the identity of the chaplains who choose to be involved and will not engage their ministry agencies on their behalf without the FRC’s permission. The researcher
assumes that TPCC and other CAOs will have access to the study to inform their liaison activities with the sending sources.

**Definitions**

First Responder Chaplains (FRCs) and First Responder (FR) Chaplaincy are terms the author chose to use in reference to police and fire chaplains as a single group. The term First Responder (FR) encompasses secondary and tertiary members of police and fire agencies, such as Community Police Officers, Reserve Police Officers, Emergency Medical Technicians, dispatchers, and volunteers of those agencies. In many cases, cities may employ both police and fire chaplains as separate entities, while in other cases, they may share the same chaplain or chaplains for both services. This study will focus on FRCs working with paid or volunteer police officers, sheriff’s deputies, other law enforcement entities, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) under state, county, or city control.

The term “burnout” has come into common usage in research related to the helping professions. While it is not the primary focus of this study to assess burnout in participating FRCs, the term “burnout” surfaces often enough that referencing Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter’s original definition is helpful. They write, “Burnout is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will – an erosion of the human soul.”\(^{19}\) It includes three primary diagnostic factors. Burnout emerges first in emotional exhaustion (EE), a condition in which overworked or over-traumatized chaplains become drained of emotional capital. EE is the first domino to fall, which

then tips the second, depersonalization (DP), as the chaplain’s relationships become strained, and their ministry begins to take on a cynical air that negatively impacts those to whom they minister because of their increasingly detached affect. The final domino to fall is the chaplain’s sense of personal accomplishment (PA) in their work as their perception of their calling and effectiveness erodes. The secondary focus of this study is to assess burnout in FRCs over time and primarily to assess the connections between the symptoms of burnout in a moment in time with FRC perceptions of their sources of church affirmation of their ministry.

Other terms of art that are of note to mention here include secondary traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. Again, these terms may be assumed pivotal in a study like this; however, other than their incidental connection to the case of any given subject in the study, they are neither the focus nor a central factor sought out for this study.

“Support structures” and “social support” both have broad definitions within the helping professions, including those supports such as family and peer relationships, workplace programs, professional and pastoral counseling, and self-care. However, this study will focus upon the narrow, vertical support system related to FRCs’ support from their spiritual support structures, described by Drake Terry and Christopher Cunningham, who noted congregational support for clergy as having a negative relationship to burnout. This support structure may include such organizations as denominations, local churches, and parachurch licensing and endorsing

---


agencies. These groups typically provide one or more support means, including licensing or ordination, legal and insurance coverage, training, mentorship, prayer, or other material support.

The author coined the term “Sending Sources” to delimit further the broader terms noted above, “support structures” and “social support.” This study focuses narrowly upon those support structures that send chaplains into the field to minister to FRs. Sending sources are those noted agencies: denominations, local churches, and parachurch licensing and endorsing groups. The author designated “chaplaincy organizational agencies” (COAs) to refer to those agencies, like TPCC, that work as intermediaries between police and fire agencies and FRC sending sources. COAs are often parachurch ministries that recruit, vet, train, and provide fellowship opportunities for chaplains located within a specific geographic region or faith community. They may be stand-alone organizations for large police or fire departments, such as the King County Sheriff’s Office or the Seattle Police Department. These organizations seldom license, ordain, or endorse FRCs, but can help first responder agencies gain qualified personnel to fill professional roles for which the agencies cannot adequately recruit, vet, or train.

**Limitations**

One of the apparent limitations of this study is the lack of precedent academic research on the FRC demographic. Without a prior foundational study directly related to this unique chaplaincy field, this study will break new ground that does not find direct support in academic literature. This paucity of information creates a natural limitation to the tools used to assess burnout in FRCs. This limitation also affects the certainty of any conclusions drawn between the proposed solution and its effect on FRC burnout. Further studies will be required to more accurately ascertain the adequacy of the conclusions drawn in this study.
The standard limitations of participation within the study group exist. However, TPCC has kindly offered access to both member FRCs and those FRCs who have previously attended the PFCTA. The researcher will contact the latter via digital means with expected limitations in subject responses due to changes in contact information or present ministry participation. TPCC does not update information on non-member FRCs. The researcher will offer the former the opportunity to participate at a TPCC training meeting and through digital communication and follow-on interviews.

The author will attempt to include as many FRC support agencies as practicable in the study and expects that responses may be sparse. The author will contact the various endorsing agents and churches via telephonic and digital media. There is no guarantee that the author can obtain accurate contact information for these sending sources, but each participating FRC will be asked to provide the most recent contact information available.

The scope of this study does not permit broad cross-comparisons relating to differing race, gender, or theological components of individual FRCs. Furthermore, the demographic chosen for this study cannot account for these factors given the low representation of female and ethnically diverse FRCs. However, future studies may take these factors into account as the field of study develops.

Of particular note are the limitations of contact in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, in-person contact may not always be possible or advisable. Nevertheless, the author will make every attempt to meet in person with participants, where appropriate, and protect the safety and observe the comfort level of each one, observing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended protective measures at the time of each contact.
Delimitations

This study is intentionally limited to the small population of TPCC FRCs and those who have attended the PFCTA. The purpose of this delimitation is to focus narrowly upon FRCs who are presently engaged in FR ministry in the TPCC region while providing additional broadening information from the geographically dispersed population of PFCTA graduates. Additionally, the study is delimited in its focus upon one type of structural support, the sending source, as previously noted. The author recognizes the multiplicity of support systems that negatively relate to burnout and notes that this delimitation creates another limitation to the study: the probability that the lack of the support system assessed in an FRC’s ministry may not be the only factor among the indicators of burnout in the FRC. Further study must follow that helps determine which support systems have a greater or lesser relationship to burnout in FRC ministry.

The author investigated many possible inventories and concluded that the FBI, with its SEEM and SIMS components, along with a self-developed demographic questionnaire, will provide the best information for the scope of the study. The FBI is unique in that it assesses the two components of EE and DP against their opposite PA, recognizing that clergy often express high effects on both poles. The strange coupling of high EE and DP is often balanced out by a strong sense of PA in ministry, creating resilience against burnout among ministers. Imbalance in these areas that include a low PA may be an indicator of present or impending burnout. Each FRC participant will take this assessment. Follow-on interviews will be conducted with participants to review their FBI results and further discuss their perceptions of the support they are presently receiving and the foundational support they received upon entering FRC ministry.


23 Ibid., 2-3.
The author developed a separate questionnaire for the sending sources targeted in this study. The instructional tool to be disseminated to the support structure agencies will be developed with TPCC and chaplain participants to assist them with the problem the study addresses, which TPCC has agreed is a current topic of conversation within their governing board. After implementing the intervention strategy, the participants will again conduct the FBI to determine the effect of the intervention strategy. The researcher will conduct a final survey with participants to assess participant perceptions of the intervention and its effect upon their FBI scores and connections with their sending sources.

**Thesis Statement**

Like all ministries within the church, FR chaplaincy requires ministers that are ecclesiastically recognized for their ministry and sent with support from their sending sources. Chaplains who do not receive this upfront support tend to work in isolation, which can lead to frustration and lower their ability to manage the stressors of ministry. The core thesis of this study is that chaplains who are properly affirmed, supported, and sent to the FR mission field by their sending sources are less likely to experience isolation and therefore should experience lower rates of burnout. When a sending source recognizes FRC ministry as a missional, ecclesiastical role, they are more likely to affirm the FRC’s ministry. Affirmations may come in the form of ordination or endorsement, inclusion on staff as adjunct pastors or local missionaries, financial support, public recognition as a minister sent out to the community from the church, prayer support, further ministry training, mentorship, or leadership oversight. These support structures create an interpersonal and spiritually linked network that can enhance ministry effectiveness and decrease isolation and the likelihood of ministry burnout for the FRC. They
also create a bridge between those FRs to whom chaplains minister and the local church community. When chaplains receive positive affirmation of their calling, along with structural support from their sending agencies, they are better prepared to endure the trials and traumas they will encounter on the FR front lines and will improve as pastors and missionaries to FRs. Without these support structures in place, chaplains may lose confidence in their ministry efforts over time and experience the harmful effects of EE and DP, possibly even leaving their calling early out of frustration and disappointment. Even if they remain, they may become ineffective in their ministry due to a reduced sense of PA and increased isolation. Therefore, training an FR chaplain’s sending source to better connect with their minister should increase the chaplain’s social support structure, add affirmation of and recognition for their ministry, and remediating ministry burnout. The expected result is that the proposed remediation should improve the chaplain’s PA, decrease EE and DP, and reduce perceptions of isolation, thereby creating more effective support to the FR community and enhancing the chaplain’s evangelistic and pastoral efforts.


25 Ibid., 84.

26 Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout,” 274.
Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, the bulk of the literature presented addresses burnout in relation to both the helping professions and ministry in general. The author found no literature expressly dedicated to the narrowly defined area of First Responder Chaplaincy. Most of the literature that approaches ministry burnout primarily addresses the broad profession of parish clergy, with some studies focused upon hospital and military chaplaincy. The chapter also addresses the broad theological context of chaplaincy ministries without trying to homogenize a singular approach to precisely how all churches should send their chaplains into the mission field. Instead, the author attempts to give great deference to the vast array of theological traditions that endorse or support a chaplain’s work. The theoretical foundations section establishes the benefit of sending source recognition and affirmation of their chaplains in a manner that suits a minister who will be called upon to perform duties pastors, missionaries, and evangelists often perform. It highlights the particular benefit of ongoing sending source participation in a chaplain’s ministry that shields them from burnout and creates a higher probability of longevity in their ministry.

Literature Review

Many authors have written on police and fire chaplaincy addressing the stressors involved in these types of First Responder Chaplain (FRC) ministries. However, the academic literature is scarce. Perhaps this is because it is challenging to locate where FRCs fit in the ministry field, much less how they fit in the ecclesiastical structure. FRCs most often find their bases in churches and denominations, may well be licensed or ordained, and sometimes engage with national Chaplaincy organizations such as the International Conference of Police Chaplains.
(ICPC), the Federation of Fire Chaplains (FFC), or the International Police and Fire Chaplains Association (IPFCA). Some also belong to local chaplaincy organizational agencies (COAs), such as the one the author belongs to, the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. These umbrella organizations provide training, fellowship, and some limited benefits to their membership but do not typically ordain or license chaplains. They are professional organizations created to assist FR agencies, chaplains, and sending sources; they set standards for, advance, and legitimize FR chaplaincy so that local police and fire agencies may have greater confidence in the chaplains they employ.

First Responder Chaplaincy in General

Chaplains sometimes work as local parish clergy, serving churches within the city or county they serve as chaplains. They may be paid or volunteer, but paid chaplains may not receive monetary support as employees of agencies they serve, per Constitutional constraints qualified by US Supreme Court rulings. Chaplains are sometimes licensed or ordained, but not every agency requires such licensing, and some agencies have very informal guidelines for their chaplain programs. Most institutional chaplains in the United States are Christian, but there is a growing number of Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish chaplains. The nature of the work of FR Chaplaincy is unique in that it requires many of the skills of both parish clergy and missionaries but deals with a higher volume of trauma, much as hospital chaplains who serve in the Emergency Departments do. Thus, it is pertinent to this thesis to review the academic

---

27 *Lemon v Kurtzman*, 403 US 602 (1971). In this ruling, the Court created the “Lemon Test,” which proscribes that in order to gauge whether a religious organization partnering with government creates a Constitutional violation of the Wall of Separation, three prongs must be met, namely whether 1) there is a secular purpose for the function provided by the religious group, 2) the primary effect is to advance religion, and 3) the partnership might create excessive government entanglement in religious affairs. The author’s agency, T-PCC was the defendant in this case and received the favorable ruling of the Court.
literature on ministry generally and the literature that distinguishes between church ministry and chaplaincy.

**Parish Clergy and Chaplains**

As noted, there is a dearth of academic quality literature available on police and firefighter chaplaincy. Kevin Flannelly, Stephen Roberts, and Andrew Weaver provide the only study on FR chaplains reviewed.\(^28\) The bulk of the literature available and applicable to this study primarily addresses clergy, generally. However, it occasionally focuses more specifically on chaplaincy in healthcare and the Veterans Administration settings. There are close connections between the kinds of pastoral work that both clergy and chaplains perform, yet there are also distinct differences. Lindsay Carey and Bruce Rumbold identify specific hospital chaplaincy skills that parallel those of clergy in parish settings and are evident in FR chaplaincy. These include such services as providing pastoral counseling and biblical guidance, walking with patients and healthcare personnel through difficult and often traumatic life events, teaching,\(^29\) upholding sacred values and mores, and providing appropriate religious rituals for those who request it.\(^30\)

However, at variance with parish clergy, the institutional, law enforcement, and firefighter chaplains work as missionaries in their communities, interacting with and ministering

---


to both Christian and non-Christian sectors of society. Thus, in these roles, chaplains find themselves ministering in ways in which clergy are less often likely to engage. Chaplains may find themselves interacting with and caring for persons of other faiths, sometimes requiring openness to hear other religious and non-religious perspectives. They may work collaboratively with clergy or mental health professionals from various Christian or non-Christian traditions, requiring a level of secular engagement and ecumenism not expected in the parish setting.\textsuperscript{31}

Lastly, it is essential to note that chaplains in both the hospital and FR environments are not organizational leaders, as church pastors tend to be. Instead, chaplains are support personnel subordinate to administrative leadership and professional functionaries such as hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, city mayors, police officers, and firefighters. Thus, chaplains are members of a team and have professional boundary lines drawn for them that constrain their roles within their organizations.\textsuperscript{32} While many of the stressors are similar, though less intense among parish clergy, the environment in which FR chaplains work is substantively different, leading to different types and degrees of stressors. Though the FR chaplain demographic presently suffers from little academic research, the similarities they share with parish clergy and hospital chaplains make comparisons possible. The existing literature provides a fair examination until academia accomplishes target-specific studies that address FR chaplaincy.

**The Unique Role of the FR Chaplain**

First Responder chaplains face another unique challenge that is not as often seen in parish ministry. While a good deal of their ministry may find its locus in direct, relational ministry with police, firefighters, support personnel, and community members such as volunteers, they are

\textsuperscript{31} Carey and Rumbold, “Good Practice Chaplaincy,” 1423.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 1422.
called out at all hours to support first responders at various, sometimes extreme, traumatic incidents. Terry and Cunningham note that the stressors that general clergy face are on par with those of mental health professionals,\(^{33}\) pointing out that clergy tend to suffer from greater chronic disease rates than the population at large.\(^{34}\) Jason Hotchkiss and Ruth Lesher agree on this point, adding that health care chaplains deal with mental health issues to a greater degree than do parish clergy, which can tend to lead to higher rates of burnout.\(^{35}\) Given the greater focus of FR chaplaincy upon high incident traumatic events, such as auto fatalities, suicides and suicidal individuals, and line of duty (LOD) deaths, it follows that FR chaplains are on the front lines of repeated traumatic exposure and may well experience greater levels of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) and burnout than either parish clergy or hospital chaplains. Susannah Kondrath notes that institutional chaplains with over 20 years of experience suffer from higher rates of both STS and burnout than clergy over the same course of time.\(^{36}\) She then softens the blow, however, noting that Compassion Satisfaction (CS) among chaplains is high and may dull the effects of STS and burnout,\(^{37}\) attributing it tentatively to the nature of trauma work that tends to bring about a sense of Personal Accomplishment (PA) amidst the strenuous work environment.\(^{38}\) Flannelly, Roberts, and Weaver’s study of FR chaplains from police, fire, and the American Red Cross who responded to Ground Zero following the 9-11 attacks in New York City affirmed that while compassion fatigue increased with the number of days spent on site, CS among those

\(^{33}\) Terry and Cunningham, “The Sacred and Stressed,” 1543.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 1544.

\(^{35}\) Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors,” 89.

\(^{36}\) Susannah Robb Kondrath, “Trauma-Informed Ministry: Professional Quality of Life among Clergy and Veterans Health Administration Chaplains” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2019), 26, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 27.
chaplains was also high.\textsuperscript{39} Thus, while the unique roles of chaplains may create more exposure to trauma than parish clergy, a sense of PA and a resultant CS among FR chaplains seems to be a factor in ameliorating the damaging effects of compassion fatigue. The demographic covered in the span of literature reviewed is not directly that of FR chaplains, given the paucity of research directed at that demographic. Presently, the only vehicles available to researchers in this area are extrapolations from existing literature, culled from references to burnout in the general population and compared to specific phenomena among clergy and hospital chaplaincy.

### Burnout in General

Burnout is a term generally applied to decreased satisfaction and effectiveness in employees over time and under profession-specific stressors. It is an area of study pioneered by Maslach and Leiter.\textsuperscript{40} They define burnout as “the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will – an erosion of the human soul.”\textsuperscript{41} The burnout process begins with emotional exhaustion (EE), the draining of emotional resources, leaving the helper unable to either emotionally connect or withstand further emotional engagement. This exhaustion leads to depersonalization (DP), in which the helper withdraws from emotional attachment with either clients or those in their personal relational sphere. Increases in EE and DP lead to a decrease in the helper’s sense of personal achievement (PA), leaving them feeling less capable or productive.\textsuperscript{42} T. Skovholt and

\textsuperscript{39} Flannelly, Roberts, and Weaver, “Correlates of Compassion Fatigue and Burnout,” 222-223.

\textsuperscript{40} Maslach and Leiter, \textit{The Truth about Burnout}. See also Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson, \textit{The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual}, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1986).

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{42} Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout," 287.
M. Trotter-Matthison, writing concerning burnout in helping professions, note two distinct styles of burnout: “caring burnout” and “meaning burnout.” The former relates to what Maslach and Leiter refer to as EE, while the latter loosely relates to DP but more specifically identifies the loss of a personal sense of meaning in one’s calling to care for others. Skovholt and Trotter-Matthison further identify one casualty of burnout as the caregiver’s capacity for empathic involvement. The opposite error is becoming overinvolved with the stresses of their clients and is just as troubling a problem, heightening the helper’s stress as emotional boundaries erode. This type of excessive emotional expenditure bears a positive relationship with both EE and DP. Not at all insignificant to chaplaincy is the topic of STS, which is closely related to compassion fatigue and occurs when chaplains and other helping professionals repeatedly listen to the stories of those exposed to traumatic events. While each of these authors speaks to more general audiences regarding burnout, many themes remain the same for FR chaplains, but the repeated, long-term exposure to more intense traumatic incidents remains a standout differentiator for FR chaplains.

**Burnout Among Clergy**

Several studies researched factors for burnout among clergy, but again, none directly addressing FR chaplains. Christopher Adams et al. compared clergy DP to social workers or counselors, teachers, police officers, and other emergency personnel. Clergy fell in the middle of

---


44 Ibid., 80.

45 Ibid., 58.

46 Ibid., 58.

47 Ibid., 425.
the pack, without about the same DP rates as teachers, higher rates than social workers and counselors, but lower rates than police officers. Adams et al. also noted a higher negative relationship to PA among clergy members than among counselors.\textsuperscript{48} Chandler’s study notes that over-involvement in ministry was a significant factor in increasing EE and DP, while DP and PA were most impacted by whether times of rest and renewal were available to clergy. This factor was a lower predictor of EE.\textsuperscript{49} Chandler identified “spiritual dryness,” a sense of distance from God, and loss of ministry direction, though not of spirituality, as a primary predictor of EE among general clergy.\textsuperscript{50} Alternatively, L.K. Barnard and J.F. Curry identified “self-compassion” as the most significant predictor of EE in parish clergy,\textsuperscript{51} supporting the intrapersonal dynamic also noted by Chandler but focused within the self rather than an internal sense of relationship with God. Richard Foss found that “emotional reactivity, the presence of interpersonal triangles in the workplace, a lack of opportunity to express feelings, and attacks from needy people or coworkers” were predictive of higher EE and DP among clergy and helping professionals,\textsuperscript{52} adding an interpersonal dynamic to understanding burnout. Foss echoed Chandler’s assertion that feelings of “relational distance from God”\textsuperscript{53} and a sense of loss of purpose\textsuperscript{54} are factors in clergy


\textsuperscript{49} Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 285.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 283.

\textsuperscript{51} L.K. Barnard and J.F. Curry, “The Relationship of Clergy Burnout to Self-Compassion and Other Personality Dimensions” \textit{Pastoral Psychol} 61, 159 (2012), https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s11089-011-0377-0. Barnard adds that “clergy who have low self-compassion and are at risk for burnout are also likely to feel ashamed of themselves and likely to lose themselves in their role, dismissing their worth outside the role” (160). The theological differences between Barnard’s assessment and Chandler’s are noteworthy, but perhaps related to one’s feeling of acceptance by God, which can be affected by “wilderness experiences” that lead to spiritual dryness.

\textsuperscript{52} Richard Wayne Foss, “Burnout among Clergy and Helping Professionals: Situational and Personality Correlates” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2002), 16, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

\textsuperscript{53} Foss, “Burnout Among Clergy, 48.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 16.
burnout, suggesting a third, “extrapersonal” dynamic. Adams et al. identified “adrenaline exhaustion” as a negative result of even the most invigorating elements of ministry, those that create a sense of PA, that overtaxes the adrenal system and leaving clergy with negative physical and emotional impacts. Foss related this phenomenon to over-engagement in ministry and squeezing out all attempts to encounter what Chandler stated as the all-important factor of rest and renewal.

In sum, burnout factors (EE, leading to DP, leading to decreasing PA), STS, compassion fatigue, adrenaline exhaustion, spiritual dryness, and other resource-depleting effects of ministry in the parish and hospital environments should exhibit amplification in the FR chaplaincy field. Add to this Kondrath’s study showing that chaplains, in general, show higher rates of STS and burnout than their clergy peers when they have served in their ministries for more than twenty years, and one may presume that the intensity of FR chaplaincy is ministry in the middle of the perfect storm. As Kondrath notes above, however, there is hope for FR chaplains, as they still manage to experience higher PA, even during the traumatic events and STS they endure. As Hotchkiss and Lesher note, “self-actualized” chaplains see what they do as a meaning-filled calling and enhance their compassion satisfaction despite the threats of STS or burnout. Chandler calls for strengthening clergy burnout studies by focusing on the themes of rest, renewal, and social support, which she asserts are ameliorating factors that create better spiritual health. In a study of mental health services provided to pastors by three different

---

55 Adams et al., “Clergy Burnout,” 150.
56 Foss, “Burnout Among Clergy,” 16.
58 Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors,” 89.
59 Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 274.
denominations, Bobby Trihub et al. received suggestions from the pastors regarding how their denominations could better support them. The first suggestion was that they simply wanted to be noticed, to have their well-being heeded by denominational leadership. They also suggested that support systems for pastors through peer networks were valuable.\(^{60}\)

As noted above, chaplaincy can be a gratifying profession, even though it exposes the chaplain to significant trauma and stressors that differentiate it from other forms of ministry. Though burnout and compassion fatigue are commonplace in chaplaincy, high compassion satisfaction and PA appear to be the reward for those called to this ministry.\(^{61}\) Countering the effects of burnout and STS in chaplaincy ministry requires finding support structures that refresh the meaning and purpose inherent in the chaplain’s calling.

**Social Support – Individual Support Structures**

Clergy face many obstacles in ministry, not the least of which come from those they serve. They face a level of isolation due to the difficulty of finding confidants with whom they can share their struggles since they are under scrutiny in the fishbowl of congregational ministry. As Foss reminds, they are “people-pleasers by nature” and can withdraw when support is not apparent from congregation members.\(^{62}\) As previously noted, their denominational support structures often forget them and make them feel invisible. An unspoken and ugly fact in ministry is that there is often territorialism, invisible walls of doctrinal differences between geographically collocated churches and their pastors, and competition over current and potential

---


\(^{61}\) Flannelly, “Correlates,” 223.

congregants standing between pastors. This divide makes it difficult for them to find peers they trust. Given this precarious situation, it is necessary that clergy – and chaplains in particular – should engage social support structures in order to decrease the likelihood of eventual burnout, as a lack thereof is closely associated with burnout in their profession.\textsuperscript{63} One of the sad reports from respondents in this study was an expected lack of support,\textsuperscript{64} indicating cynicism consistent with the DP function of burnout but directed at those support structures from whom clergy expected to receive such support. Skovholt points out that this cynicism is toxic and must be countered by the presence of positive colleagues to support against the inevitable negative colleagues that exacerbate stress reactions.\textsuperscript{65} Sonia Mims adds the dimension of resilience, the ability to recover and find a “new normal” in the face of trauma and stress, as a factor positively influenced by strong social support, noting that a strong social support system enhances resilience in an individual.\textsuperscript{66} Key to this thesis is Mims’ conclusion that the support of congregation members may well improve clergy resilience.\textsuperscript{67}

Seemingly contrary to the role these authors posited about social support, Chandler’s study found that of several models of social support examined, only family support bore a negative relationship to burnout in clergy. She noted, however, that this finding may be more indicative of poor or lacking support systems in the lives of the study participants.\textsuperscript{68} Adding to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 852.
\item Skovholt and Mathison, “Resilient Practitioner,” 90-91.
\item Ibid., 23.
\item Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 285.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Chandler’s critique is a study by Andrew Miles and Rae Proeschold-Bell that gained mixed results regarding peer support groups as a significant form of social support.⁶⁹ In this study, such groups were found to be generally helpful, but not for all clergy. Many reported negative experiences with or expressed ambivalence toward the effectiveness of peer support groups. In other words, those for whom they worked found support from ministry isolation, while those for whom they did not work, the authors suggested, should seek other opportunities for support.⁷⁰ As mentioned, Trihub et al. suggests that creating support networks for clergy is valuable and inexpensive and is a buffer for clergy mental health from the strains of isolation and other pressures of ministry.⁷¹ In an interesting study on clergy perceptions of social support, David Eagle, Celia Hybels, and Rae Proeschold-Bell found that “perceived support had a weak association with received support.”⁷² Clergy with a positive perception of their social support resources showed fewer symptoms of depression, and that those clergy who were more secure in their connections with others were much more likely to have a positive view of their support systems.⁷³ They also posited that clergy tend to misperceive their actual levels of received support, making them vulnerable to mental health struggles.⁷⁴ Further, among those clergy studied, those who had very low perceptions of their amount of support still reported a large

---


⁷⁰ Ibid., 215, 221.


⁷³ Ibid., 2055-2056.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2057.
network of close friends with whom they could talk, indicating that their perception did not always match their reality.\textsuperscript{75} Symptoms of depression in this study were more related to perceptions of social support that were unsubstantiated by high levels of received support reported by clergy.\textsuperscript{76} The study concluded, contra Mims,\textsuperscript{77} that helping clergy engage and appreciate the support they already have may yield better results than attempting to increase or deepen their support systems.\textsuperscript{78}

In a broad study of various non-clergy counseling patients, Carolyn Cutrona and Valerie Cole emphasized the “natural networks” of family and close friends as effective for creating a positive social support structure that is strongly effective vis a vis seeking professional help.\textsuperscript{79} They helpfully identified two impediments to people seeking help, namely, the belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness leading to the subsequent behavior of hiding their need for help. Further, those within their network may not ask them if they need help for fear of intruding upon their independence. Networks are only as effective as each party’s willingness to overcome these “maladaptive behaviors,” and clergy and others properly seeking support should help their networks by affirming the level of support they offer.\textsuperscript{80} Combined with the concept of increasing clergy perceptions of their received support, these hypotheses make a good case for emphasizing personal networks for support. This fits with Chandler’s finding that family support was the most

\textsuperscript{75} Eagle, Hybels, and Proeschold-Bell, “Perceived Social Support,” 2067.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 2068.
\textsuperscript{77} Mims, “Social Support,” 22.
\textsuperscript{78} Eagle, Hybels, and Proeschold-Bell, “Perceived Social Support,” 2069.
helpful of support structures in alleviating symptoms of pastoral burnout\(^{81}\) and Mims’ assertion that clergy would benefit from an increase in social support.\(^{82}\) It is valuable to note that perhaps both increasing clergy perception of their existing support networks and increasing the breadth and depth of their networks is a viable solution for helping FR chaplains deal with the stresses of their unique ministry that lead to STS and burnout.

**Social Support – Organizational Support Structures**

In terms of organizational support, chaplains often face greater isolation from such “sending” support structures as denominations, congregations, church pastors, and endorsing or licensing agencies in that their work is not in the church and thus remains hidden from view of those structures. A common joke many chaplains hear when telling fellow pastors that they have entered into chaplaincy is the question, “Oh really? When did you decide to leave the ministry?” According to Galek et al., the resultant lack of support from their sending organizations can increase the likelihood of eventual burnout due to constrained access to resources. They emphasize that access to those support structures is a mitigating factor in burnout as it “enhance(s) personal resources.”\(^{83}\)

While Galek et al. agree with the previously discussed importance of family and friends as important sources of support,\(^{84}\) they argue from a systems theory perspective that as the pastor begins identifying with the system in which they operate, taking on its cynicisms, stresses, and interpersonal conflicts as their own, further social support is essential as a buffering agent against

---

\(^{81}\) Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 285.  
\(^{83}\) Galek et al., “Burnout,” 638.  
\(^{84}\) Ibid., 639.
the strain such systems create. Noting previously mentioned research by Maslach and Jackson, Galek et al. point out that the level of support either denied or offered by supervisors can have a positive or negative impact on burnout in the workplace. According to Terry and Cunningham, the importance of support from church members, denominational resources, and pastoral peers is another essential resource to ameliorate ministry stress for clergy. In a study of United Methodist Clergy, Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell et al. found perceived congregational support to be important for clergy to experience positive mental health (PMH). However, this factor did not diminish negative mental health effects (NMH), while heavy demands from the congregation were factors in clergy NMH. The resultant suggestion was that congregations should make clear exhibitions of support to their pastors. Research by Carl Wells found that clergy health and stress levels are positively affected by the support of both congregation and denomination.

Complimenting Cutrona and Cole’s delineation of maladaptive behaviors in support-seeking, Terry and Cunningham discussed the complicating factor in clergy solicitations of support from their denomination or their congregation, specifically that they did not wish to be seen as spiritually weak and therefore unable to pastor their church or advance in their organization.

Once again, FR chaplains are a breed apart from parish clergy. They do not face some of the interpersonal, congregational conflicts pastors face, just as pastors do not face the level of

---

85 Galek et al., “Burnout,” 635.
86 Ibid., 638.
87 Terry and Cunningham, “Sacred and Stressed,” 1545.
90 Terry and Cunningham, “Sacred and Stressed,” 1545.
regular trauma exposure chaplains face. Thus, chaplains are insulated to some degree from some ministry stressors while yet exposed to others. Without extensive studies of FR chaplains to review, the literature on clergy at large gives us an azimuth to start the journey. Chaplains do not often worry about pay, vacation, retreats, or other job benefit requests from denominational headquarters, as most FR chaplains are volunteers and, if paid at all, are paid through donations, much as are missionaries. However, chaplains still benefit from social support structures within the church in many of the same ways that pastors do. They benefit from knowing that those who send them are paying attention to their welfare and that they were (and are) called to local missions in the church’s backyard, so to speak; not to congregations of believers but to frontline emergency responders who may or may not be of the Christian faith or any faith at all.

Guarding Against Clergy Burnout

The author previously noted several strategies relating to guarding against clergy burnout, and the literature is replete with suggestions from staying physically fit to practicing self-compassion to engaging various social support structures, both natural and organizational. Hotchkiss and Lesher suggest clergy develop a self-care plan and cultivate a work environment that is supportive and non-toxic. Positivity and sources of personal inspiration are essential for chaplains facing a negative culture. They summarize burnout mitigation well:

While all mindful self-care factors mediated between compassion satisfaction and burnout, self-compassion and purpose, mindful self-awareness, supportive relationships, supportive structure, mindful relaxation were the strongest

---

92 Adams et al., “Clergy Burnout,” 149.
93 Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors,” 95.
94 Ibid., 87.
protective factors, in order of strength, against burnout. Burnout risk is reduced by the feeling that a chaplain’s work is a calling that they enjoy.\textsuperscript{95}

Perhaps because they see their work as a calling, and because of the higher sense of PA in their work noted among clergy in general, ministers enjoy many mitigating factors to burnout that increase compassion (and thus, ministry) satisfaction.\textsuperscript{96} Among the many studies on clergy burnout are several that compared this positive affect clergy experience against the negative affect often endured in ministry. In response to this phenomenon, Leslie Francis, Patrick Laycock, and Christine Brewster developed the FBI in 2005, modifying the MBI specifically for clergy. They founded their modifications on this polarized – or balanced – affect assessment of ministers.\textsuperscript{97} Several studies by Francis (with Village, Robbins, and Wolff, with Laycock and Ratter, and with Laycock and Crea) used the FBI to assess balanced affect among clergy in the US, Italy, and England. These studies of denominationally and geographically diverse clergy groups confirmed the balanced affect between EE and PA among ministers.\textsuperscript{98} In short, finding meaning in ministry creates a buffer from the assaults of interpersonal conflict woes, low pay, being “on-call twenty-four-seven,” and other clergy life and work stressors. Ensuring a strong network of supportive family and friends, taking Sabbath rests, restful relaxation and intentional leisure activities, avoiding overattachment and overworking (boundary setting), a personal practice of spiritual disciplines, self-awareness, prayer, finding fathers and mothers in the faith as

\textsuperscript{95} Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors,” 94.
\textsuperscript{96} Adams et al., “Clergy Burnout,” 167.
\textsuperscript{97} Francis, Laycock, and Brewster, “Work-Related,” 2.
guides and role models, self-compassion, positive reframing, and self-esteem, are among many of the suggested techniques for alleviating the stresses that lead to burnout. Dulling the general enthusiasm that attend these studies, Hotchkiss and Lesher add a dose of realism, reminding researchers that everyone in the helping professions should accept failure as normative: No intervention meets with 100% success. Pastors deal with human beings, which means others have a say in whether their ministrations are received or rejected. Thus, while Francis et al. note that the negative affect (emotional exhaustation) is offset by the positive affect (satisfaction in ministry), EE should not be quickly dismissed, as it still requires remedying to promote better psychological health among clergy. Additionally, “Complete reliance upon God” is a necessary hallmark of support noted by Staley that demands clergy recognition of God’s creation of community and emphasizes the well-being benefits every minister stands to gain from healthy connections with both God and His church. Thus, while authors have filled entire libraries with books on self-care strategies and how to implement them, the focus of this study is to improve sending source affirmation and connection for FR chaplains.

Theological Foundations

The presence of chaplains as formal ministers of God in the Christian church is well established in the current practice of chaplaincy. Chaplains formally minister according to their denomination or faith traditions in many sectors of society outside of the church itself, such as hospitals, prisons, the military, racetracks, fraternal orders, the U.S. Veterans Administration, 

100 Hotchkiss, “Factors,” 88.
sports leagues, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and, as this study addresses, in police and fire services at the city, county, state, and national levels. While chaplaincy in America has diversified in its religious representation to include a large variety of religions, the focus of this study is solely upon Christian chaplaincy to First Responders, serving police, fire, and emergency medical services.

Two questions must be addressed here. First, are chaplains necessarily pastors or missionaries, and thus something more than lay-ministers? Second, if they are more than lay-ministers, should they be sent by the church in a manner that befits an ecclesial role, much as a pastoral ordination or appointment to a church, or as a missionary commission to a post overseas? If chaplaincy is merely an ad hoc lay ministry, then support from the church, including such functions as ordination, licensing, ceremonial commissioning and sending, or simply direct oversight may well be minimal considerations of many denominations and churches. The complex answer to the second question includes the consideration of an intentional but qualified affirmation. Sending sources ought to appropriately send their chaplains. However, the former question may impact whether or how they should do this. Unifying answers to the first question may not be feasible or may be too complex for this study to address. One reason for this is that many denominations and churches view ordination as a call specifically to serve the church’s membership in “the ministry of the Word and sacrament.”

Thus, churches often limit the initial test of a call to ministry as a call to the church pastorate. While this emphasis upon pastoral calling seems to exclude this sector ministry as a primary calling, John Colwell argues

---


that many sector ministries, such as educational ministries, are often then included as valid extensions of the pastoral calling. Once again, this tension between ministry calling viewed as strictly for shepherding the church or as including parachurch vocations and outreach ministries often leads to a seemingly inevitable exclusion of chaplains from affirmation and support by the church. This exclusion is often felt deeply by sector ministers such as chaplains.105

As the author has noted, formally licensed pulpit ministers have often seen chaplains as something less than pastors. Mark Newitt puts it in brutal terms regarding hospital chaplains and their relationship with the church, noting that it is “characterized by a deep sense of alienation in one direction and profound mistrust in the other.”106 Part of this phenomenon within the ministerial culture is likely due to the chaplain’s primary work finding its locus outside of the church walls and among largely unchurched populations. Though the church sends missionaries overseas in settings among the unchurched, and while it sends chaplains across town to do the same, it is the missionaries who receive the full warrant of the church to bring the Gospel to the nations. While churches see missionaries as fulfilling the Great Commission, they do not as readily acknowledge local missionaries such as FRCs as ministers, and they seem to treat FRC missions as something that falls short of the Great Commission. A complete theology of chaplaincy or an exposition of the importance of formal church recognition of this ministry is not the aim of this study. However, the author will establish in this section the scriptural foundations that support chaplains as fulfilling a high ecclesiastical role in the communities they serve.

Ancient Foundations of Chaplaincy: The Priesthood and the Military

The ministry of the chaplaincy traces its origins to the priesthood of the early church in the fourth century, A.D. Commemorating Bishop Martin of Tours’ act of kindness to a beggar, and his subsequent vision wherein Jesus revealed to Martin that He had been the beggar, early priests of the Frankish armies would carry a relic, the capella (cape) of Martin, into battle. This earned them the name “chaplain.” Their ministries started with the military but expanded quickly into the courts of nobles and kings as personal priests to the royal families of early Christendom and keepers of chapels. They offered mass, led biblical studies, and even prepared documents for kings and nobles.\(^{107}\) Thus, one might readily surmise that chaplains have always been a specialized ministry within the church. Their duties, after all, include all of those reserved to the ordained priesthood: offering mass, providing confession and absolution, marrying, burying, and offering spiritual advice to kings, lords, and other officials.

Priestly chaplain functions in the military may be seen early in the Old Testament. “So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.”\(^{108}\) Aaron and Hur held Moses’ hands up to help him lead the Israelites to victory against the Amalekites. While Aaron represents the priestly class, Hur does not, so this does not fully satisfy a warrant for the priesthood in the role of providing religious support to military leaders. However, this is clearly the central role of a chaplain in military service. Victor Hamilton connects Aaron and Hur’s action with the New Testament through the word used in the Septuagint, sterizo, or “support.” This word also carries the meaning “strengthen” in the New


Testament. In the same way that Aaron and Hur “support” Moses’ hands, Jesus also
commands Peter to *strengthen* his brothers, and Paul on his journeys *strengthens* the disciples, in
his letter to the Romans expresses his desire to make them *strong*, sends Timothy to *strengthen*
the faith of the Thessalonians, and twice prays that Jesus would *strengthen* them.110

In Numbers 10:8-9, God commissions the priests of Israel to sound trumpets for battle,
whereby they would “be thought of by the LORD your God, and be saved from your
enemies.”111 The priests under Joshua carried the Ark of the Covenant – a relic, much as the relic
of Martin’s robe early Christian chaplains carried into battle – into the Jordan, drawing upon
God’s power to part the waters of the Jordan.112 When the Moabites and Ammonites came
against Jehoshaphat, the Levites raised loud praise to God on behalf of Israel. They sent
worshipers before the army as God set ambushes to destroy Israel’s enemies even before Israeli
spears saw action.113 Ralph Klein recognizes this priestly song, followed by the songs of the
people on the day of battle, as a prophetic affirmation of the oracle that they would be victorious
in battle by God’s hand, not by their own.114 While both the priests and the laity lifted their
songs, it is clear that the priests of Korah were the first to sing, demonstrating the leadership of
the Hebrew priest class in proclaiming God’s favor over the armies of Israel. Many more

ProQuest Ebook Central.

110 Lk 22:23b, Ac.18:23, Ro. 1:11, I Th. 3:2, II Th. 2:16-17 and 3:3, respectively.

111 George Buchanan Gray, "Commentary" *Numbers* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1986) 89,
http://dx.doi.org/ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.5040/9781472556288.0007.

112 Jo. 3:14-17.

113 2 Ch. 20:18-23.

114 Ralph W. Klein, “Jehoshaphat’s War against an Eastern Coalition; His Alliance with Ahaziah and His
Death,” in *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, ed. Paul D. Hanson (Minneapolis: 1517 Media, 2012) 291,
examples in Scripture show that priests played an important role in aligning the hearts and intentions of the Israelites and their kings with the purposes of God when they went to war.

Chaplains also fulfill a prophetic role within the communities they serve, much as the prophets in the Old Testament did. Taking up the cause of the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, and the distressed marks the ministry of chaplaincy just as it did the ministry of the prophets, Micah and Amos. Prophets spoke truth to kings, as when Nathan revealed David’s sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. One of the critical roles of the military chaplain today is to advise unit commanders on all issues of morals, morale, ethics, and religion, both within the unit and in their relation to the conduct of operations. AR 165-1, the US Army’s regulation manual for chaplaincy, specifies, “Chaplains provide for religious support, pastoral care, and the moral and spiritual well-being of the command.” In addition, chaplains fulfill prophetic roles to industry, institutional, and government leaders wherever they minister by speaking into medical ethics boards at hospitals, advising on prisoner treatment in jails and prisons, and teaching and advising on ethics in many professional settings.

Ancient Foundations of Chaplaincy: Commissioning

While it would be impossible to solve the question for all denominations and sects of Christianity whether to require some form of ordination for chaplaincy, there is a strong biblical precedent for the idea of commissioning chaplains. Whether the role is priestly or not, the Old

---

115 See esp. Mi. 2:1 and Am. 2:8.
116 2 Sa. 12.
Testament contains several examples of commissioning rites that confer authority and spiritual function upon individuals to act as an intermediary between God and humanity. Numbers 8:9-10 portrays the establishment of the Levitical priesthood and the form by which Moses should confer the priestly authority: “So you shall present the Levites in front of the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, and present the Levites before the Lord; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites.” God commissioned the Levites as wave offerings (verses 11 and 13), a tribe from among those in Israel expressly set aside to belong to Him (verses 14 and 16). To make atonement for the Levites that they may serve the Lord, God instructed them to “press” their hands on the heads of two bulls, one to be offered as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering (v.12). The act of leaning on the bulls’ heads with their hands was to establish a sort of ownership of, or even identification with, the bulls. This act mirrors that of the sons of Israel pressing their hands upon the Levites to establish God’s ownership of the priests. The effect of the laying on of hands in this manner established a form of substitutionary atonement and separation for sacred service, as noted by Iain Duguid: “Just as that sacrifice was a ransom that took the place of the Levites, so too they were a living sacrifice that took the place of Israel in the work of serving God. The Levites were God’s chosen substitutes to take the place of the people as a whole in being consecrated to the Lord.”

This act of commissioning the Levites for service in the Tabernacle is repeated in the commissioning ceremony for Moses’ successor, Joshua, in Numbers 27:18-23. Moses speaks to God, requesting that He might provide the people of Israel a shepherd that would lead them in

---

and out of battle as they enter the Promised Land. God commands Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; and have him stand before Eleazar, the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight” (vv.18-20). The commissioning act, including identifying those set apart by God and having the spirit, and of laying hands upon them, becomes the foundation of what will later follow in commissioning others for service to the Lord in the New Testament, as the next section will explore. The form of the commissioning acts as a symbolic transfer of Moses’ office and authority, but only “some of (his) authority” (v.20), as no one in Israel would receive Moses’ full authority or meet with God “face to face” (Exodus 33:11). This commissioning transfers only the specific military and administrative leadership authority over Israel to Joshua.\(^{119}\)

An interesting and pertinent point to note in commissioning is that it is not merely a symbolic ceremony. God does not tell Moses to lay hands upon Joshua or the Levites simply so that the people may see and dutifully respond to Moses’ authority. It is not simply a visual representation of a transfer of fiat power. Instead, there is something tangibly conferred in the process of laying hands upon a person and, likewise, in the laying of hands upon bulls. The Levites become clean before the Lord when they lay hands upon the bulls. Neither is it symbolic when the people lay hands upon the Levites. The Levites are atoned for, and likewise, they atone for the people’s sins by the laying on of hands. The act of pressing hands creates an actual transfer of guilt, which then sanctifies the sacrifices they offer. The Levites become a possession of the Lord as they are made wave (or dedication) offerings.\(^{120}\) Further, Joshua receives both


\(^{120}\) Duguid, “The Substitute.” Found at web page.
Moses’ authority and wisdom. Deuteronomy 34:9 states, “Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.” When God’s people act to commission someone to a task, they bless with wisdom and transfer purpose and authority. Thus, commissioning carries much more meaning than an abstract symbolic gesture. Jesus’ disciples understood the practical reality of commissioning and applied it, as the following sections will demonstrate.

The New Testament and Modern Chaplaincy

The New Testament offers little material directly related to military chaplaincy. However, the roles of missionary, evangelist, prophet, apostle, pastor, and teacher each emerge from the life and teachings of Jesus and within the practices of the Early Church’s leadership. These roles are common within chaplaincy ministries as chaplains teach, preach, perform clerical duties, evangelize the lost, pastor the faithful, and speak to institutional power centers in every setting they engage ministry. The growth of professional chaplaincy within the United States has forged improvements in ministrations outside of the church to hospital patients, prisoners, and military members, all while requiring increased diligence in study and training to gain standing among the helping professions. Sector ministries such as FR, racetrack, hydroplane, stock car racing, sports, and various other budding arenas of chaplaincy should seek no less than to increase professional recognition and stature. The trend among larger police and fire departments is to seek out chaplains whose qualifications mirror the educational and ecclesiastical requirements they see the more formal institutions demanding. Many departments now require an actual ecclesiastical ordination and some level of formal education that shows they are

academically qualified to address the issues for which their department members might seek them out for counseling.

While the first Christians met in synagogues and the Temple as a sect of the Jewish faith, meetings eventually expanded into homes where they broke bread daily, taught Scripture, worshiped, prayed, and fellowshipped. Violent persecution in the early centuries of the church drove Christians away from formal worship settings and into homes and other secluded settings to prevent detection from authorities. Persecution ensured the very conditions were in place to guide the church to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus to “Go” to the nations, first to Jerusalem, then to Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the world. The imperative, however, was not to establish buildings to house the faithful but to reach the lost wherever they may be found. There is no reason to assume ministry should be an either-or prospect, as there is ample evidence in the New Testament of ministry both within and outside of the church. It is a both-and imperative. The myopic view that all valid pastoral ministry is accomplished solely from the pulpit suggests that the Great Commission curves back in upon the local church – an odd version of incurvatus in se.

The pastoral office grew out of the need for shepherds in the growing church in this time of persecution. Still, the first century A.D Bishop of Antioch., Ignatius (d. 117 A.D.), had formulated a robust hierarchical episcopate, such that by his estimation, one could not speak of “the church” without an understanding of the primacy of the bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Whereas Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 155 A.D.), spoke of the presbyters in general, focusing

---

122 Ac. 2:46, 5:42, 20:20; 1 Co. 16:19; Ro. 16:5; Co. 4:15; Pm 1:2.
123 Mt. 28:19, Ac. 1:8.
not upon their order above the church laity but rather upon the humility with which they should engage their office.

And the presbyters also must be compassionate, merciful towards all men, turning back the sheep that are gone astray, visiting all the infirm, not neglecting a widow or an orphan or a poor man: but providing always for that which is honorable in the sight of God and of men, abstaining from all anger, respect of persons, unrighteous judgment, being far from all love of money, not quick to believe anything against any man, not hasty in judgment, knowing that we all are debtors of sin.\(^{125}\)

The church has since evolved down a path with multiple views of the episcopate and church administration. These views range from a literalist approach of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pe. 2:5-9), as seen in denominations like the Amish or the Church of the Brethren, to the high church bishopric of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. This study does not try to solve these disagreements in theology but instead accepts that chaplaincy is a function of the priesthood of all believers and clergy alike, therefore necessitating intentional acknowledgment, affirmation, and commissioning of chaplains by the church. A Brethren adherent can be appointed a chaplain and commissioned as such, just as a Catholic priest may be given an appointment to chaplaincy upon his ordination. The appointment of the chaplain may spring from a decentralized view of ecclesiastical hierarchy or a very centralized view.\(^{126}\) The calling, however, is a pastoral call — one in which the chaplain may meet Ignatius’ high view of the bishopric but must meet Polycarp’s call to humility, caring, and gentleness.


\(^{126}\) T-PCC stands as a perfect example of those employing a broad variety of ministers. One of the founding chaplains of the agency is a member of the Brethren denomination, while one of the current chaplains is an Eastern Orthodox priest.
In addition to the pastoral role of caring for believers in areas where people might not otherwise find ministers readily available to them, chaplains also minister to those who are not of their own faith. Thus, the chaplain’s ministry is not always one of public apologetics, as Paul on the Areopagus (Ac. 17:16-34), of ministry among the religious, as Paul in Ephesus (Ac. 19:8-10), or open-air preaching and miracles, as Paul in Lystra and Derbe (Ac. 14:8-20). It is, however, a ministry of presence among unbelievers and believers, offering the compassion and comfort of Jesus to those in need without always offering an express, verbal exposition of the gospel message.\textsuperscript{127} In this, they fulfill Jesus’ promise that people would be able to identify them as His followers by their love,\textsuperscript{128} and they exemplify Jesus’ image of the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one that has strayed (Mt. 18:12).

In that they venture out of the church doors to conduct ministry, chaplains fulfill a role as local missionaries. They carry ministry to those who might never have attended a church but who happen to live in the same communities as those who do.\textsuperscript{129} Local churches do not meet many unbelievers at points in their lives where their faith is ready to go.\textsuperscript{130} Christians often speak in religious language that is not familiar to them, about concepts with which they are only peripherally familiar, and sometimes with an expectation that they must first conform to a lifestyle that qualifies them for the message of the Gospel. Chaplains meet these people where they are and point the way to Jesus by their presence, words, and actions. They represent an incarnational ministry, one in which they bring the presence of God into volatile situations. In a

\textsuperscript{127}Newitt, “New Directions,” 420.
\textsuperscript{128}Jn. 13:35.
\textsuperscript{130}Newitt, “New Directions,” 423.
study focused on the ministry of presence among police chaplains, Valerie Gouse concluded that by creating an incarnational, calming, and caring presence, uniformed chaplains eased crisis situations and calmed potentially violent confrontations.\textsuperscript{131} Neil Holm states that chaplains bring God’s presence into the presence of another in a new way, helping them experience common grace – that divine presence sensed by both believer and non-believer alike – and opening up the possibility of transformation. While non-believers may ignore what they sense of God’s presence as divine or may not recognize the Trinitarian nature of it as Father-Creator, Son-Savior, and Spirit-Transformer, the chaplain’s presence activates some level of transformation in those with whom he or she is present. It is a reciprocal transformation that invites both chaplain and the subject of his ministrations into a deeper, restorative relationship with God.\textsuperscript{132} By being present and sharing life in common with others, the chaplain effectively represents the Gospel message, whether in word or by mere presence. In the same way that missionaries travel to foreign lands, learn the language of the people, live in their culture, and adopt many of their cultural norms, chaplains also go into the police and fire stations, wear their uniforms, learn their language and culture, and learn to function within their culture, all while maintaining their own distinct faith and values systems. By doing so, the good chaplain may win the favor of others to minister and to speak from his or her faith into their lives in ways that may offer a winning apologetic, fulfilling Jesus’ example to “seek and save that which was lost.”\textsuperscript{133}


\textsuperscript{133} Lk. 19:10.
In other words, chaplains fulfill roles of traditional ministry that many laypersons could and indeed should fulfill, but they do so in response to a calling to ministry. They also conduct other ministerial functions traditionally viewed as reserved to the pastorate or priesthood. They teach bible studies, deliver sermons, perform sacraments or ordinances of the church, officiate marriages, baptize, and conduct funerals. They fulfill the Missio Dei of God as missionaries to the world, just as local missionaries and those who reach foreign lands.\(^\text{134}\) As ministers, chaplains’ roles are not easily defined compared to pastors or missionaries, at least in the traditional sense of those ministries’ job descriptions. However, they fulfill both offices by taking on Jesus’ admonishment, “As the Father has sent me, I also send you.”\(^\text{135}\) Robert Crick sums up the roles of the chaplain well:

Chaplains are priests offering specific religious practices at home and with our military, and they are prophets advocating for the weak and disenfranchised. Chaplains are sages offering a compassionate and intentional religious experience as they provide counsel for life’s daily decisions; they are administrators… ensuring justice through the evaluation of company practices and advocacy for fair treatment and ethical practices; and they are evangelists reaching people and systems of all kinds beyond the proverbial temple gates.\(^\text{136}\)

When Jesus commissioned the disciples, sending them just as God sent Him, He revealed the nature of His ministry as an intermediary between God and men.\(^\text{137}\) As Thomas Aquinas noted, “This was a source of strength for the disciples: for they recognized the authority of Christ and knew that He was sending them by divine authority. They were also strengthened because they recognized their own dignity, the dignity of being apostles; for an apostle is one who is sent.” How much more, being sent to suffer alongside those who suffer in Jesus’ name, ought

\(^{134}\) Slater, “Living Church,” 316.
\(^{135}\) Jn. 20:21.
\(^{136}\) Crick, Outside the Gates, 69.
\(^{137}\) 1 Tim. 2:5.
chaplains be likewise commissioned and sent?\textsuperscript{138} Jesus draws the connection between His and the disciples’ mission to establish the relationship of sending – Father to Son and Son to disciples – as one that demands intentional commissioning. The John 20:21 scene is a commission that builds an incarnate version of apostolic, or sent, ministry: “The sending of Jesus by the Father is the basis of the sending entrusted to the disciples. They are taking part in the sending of the Son.”\textsuperscript{139} The sending builds strength by enfoldng the disciples within the incarnate ministry of Jesus.

Carl Holladay connects God’s instructions to Moses in selecting Joshua as his successor\textsuperscript{140} and that of Moses’ advice from his father-in-law, Jethro, to delegating his authority to select surrogates,\textsuperscript{141} to that of the disciples’ selection of seven men to expand the Gospel mission.\textsuperscript{142} God appoints a spirit-filled man that Moses must commission by the laying on of hands. Jethro suggests men who are God-fearing, trustworthy, and honest.\textsuperscript{143} Darrell Bock notes that the Acts commissioning narrative precedes ordination to ministry, a later development of the church. “These leaders already have the Spirit before hands are laid upon them.”\textsuperscript{144} Charles Talbert sees the laying on of hands as a “commissioning to a task.” The body of the church


\textsuperscript{140} Num. 27:15-23.

\textsuperscript{141} Ex. 18:17-23.

\textsuperscript{142} Acts 6:3-6.


recognizes these leaders, and the apostles confirm the calling of the seven by the church community.145 Further, in Acts 13:1-3, Paul and Barnabas are commissioned by the prophets and teachers at Antioch, who, while fasting, heard the Holy Spirit say, “Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me for the work to which I have called them” (v.2). This section adds fasting to prayer and the laying on of hands as part of the commissioning practice. L. Scott Kellum concludes that “The church should commission the called to their ministry.”146 Talbert adds that such a commissioning act “makes clear that God’s hand is behind” the missionaries and that they are therefore sent by both the church and the Spirit.147 Thus, the transfer of authority and wisdom, the impartation of gifts, the call of the Spirit as recognized by both church laity and leadership all culminate in the act of consecration of those sent upon a missionary task.

The church would do well to recall that God did not redeem us that we might erect citadels in which God and the church might dwell in safety, but to establish His kingdom on the earth and to bring it to bear in every arena of life. This mission requires taking the gospel into all the world to expose the world to all the kingdom. Holm asks a pertinent question148 that receives an answer from Paul: How can believers benefit from their interaction with non-believers? Paul’s answer comes in his opening greeting in Romans, where he expresses his longing to be in Rome to share with them a spiritual gift and to reap a harvest among them: “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.”149

---


147 Talbert, Reading Acts, 117.


149 Ro. 1:14
Bible both carry the translation, “I am a debtor to both….” Paul expresses an indebtedness and an obligation to be present among, learn from, and share with those who have not yet heard the gospel, every bit as much as those who have. Paul’s debt is that he owes them that with which he has been entrusted and is not out of that debt until he has succeeded in ministering that Gospel to the Roman church and to those barbarians and foolish who have not yet encountered Christ.\(^{150}\)

Thus, chaplains fulfill roles as pastors and missionaries on par with other biblical roles traditionally viewed as customarily reserved only to church leadership. They pastor those of the faith within the community and, while some recipients of their care may not recognize it as such, they pastor unbelievers. They share the gospel, sometimes by presence alone and without words. They fulfill sacerdotal functions, and they lead people closer to God, sometimes winning them to salvation in Jesus Christ. Most denominations recognize the pastoral role required in various forms of chaplaincy and therefore have rigorous educational and vocational practicum standards for candidates to become chaplains in the military, hospital, and prison settings. However, FRCs do not always travel the same path and may come into chaplaincy through rather informal means. For example, they may never receive an ordination ceremony, prayer with the laying on of hands,\(^{151}\) or a blessing of any sort from their sending source. This study seeks to establish that such a start to ministry can tend to create in the chaplain a sense of isolation from the church – a sense that, as noted, is already present among well-heeled chaplains – that sets an early stage for succumbing to ministry-induced stress and burnout. This study further seeks to create that bridging structure between sending source and chaplain so that the chaplain may have the


\(^{151}\) See 1 Ti. 5:22, 2 Ti. 1:6, and Ac. 6:1-6, where John M. Barkley points out that the biblical pattern for ordination includes prayer followed by the laying on of hands, which confers both authority and a commission. See Barkley “The Meaning of Ordination,” Scottish Journal of Theology 9, no. 2 (1956): 140-142.
blessing of their church authorities, both in an initial and ongoing sense. The author seeks to show that, among the many sources of support necessary to fulfill the missional calling of FR chaplaincy, this special relationship with the church or sending source is essential in affirming, blessing, commissioning, and better connecting with the FRC and his or her ministry.

**Theoretical Foundations**

As oft-mentioned above, the author found no identifiable research conducted in this narrowly focused area of burnout within the unique sector ministry of FR chaplaincy. General clergy and hospital, VA, and prison chaplains comprise the bulk of research related to ministerial burnout. A broad array of support systems has been assessed related to burnout in these fields but has not addressed the very isolated setting of chaplains in the police and fire services or the intense nature of those ministries. Concerning parish clergy, previous research has shown a strong link between congregational and denominational support structures as positively or negatively affecting burnout in church pastors.

**The Church as a Sending Source**

A foundational premise of this study is the need for support from sending sources, such as denominations, local churches, or other clergy endorsing agencies. As Trihub et al. has noted in his research, clergy expressed a strong desire to be noticed by their denominational leadership and to know that the leaders were concerned about their well-being.\(^{152}\) While the strong PA that comes from ministry among clergy broadly evidences a counter-balance to high levels of EE and

\(^{152}\) Trihub et al., “Denominational Support,” 108.
DP, that balance can be thrown off when pastors do not perceive support from congregation members, which causes them to feel isolated and perhaps creating a self-fulfilling prophecy wherein they self-isolate to protect themselves.\(^\text{153}\) Peer support has received mixed reviews in the literature, with the overall impression being that it works for some clergy but not for others.\(^\text{154}\) Multiple avenues for self-care and support from family and friends appear frequently in the literature, but the focus of support structure intervention in this study is on one facet of support, namely the sending source support, especially at the outset of the chaplain’s advance into their calling to pastor first responders.

**Sense of Calling and Support Structures**

The sense of calling is essential to clergy well-being,\(^\text{155}\) and it is no less essential for FRCs. However, clergy are often disappointed with the support they receive and can develop a cynicism toward their support structures, which can be toxic to their sense of calling.\(^\text{156}\) When congregations and other sending sources express support of ministers, it increases PA and weakens the effect of EE and DP. Support from these sources can counteract the tendency of clergy to withdraw and, while clergy should also proactively seek support, there is a need for sending source outreach to their ministers to emphasize the amount of support available to them. The perception of a lack or abundance of support from their sending sources can significantly impact clergy well-being and hasten their eventual burnout.\(^\text{157}\) Common sense might lead one to

\(^{153}\) Foss, “Burnout,” 15.

\(^{154}\) Miles and Proeschold-Bell, “Overcoming the Challenges,” 221.

\(^{155}\) Adams et al., “Clergy Burnout,” 149; Flannelly, “Correlates,” 223.

\(^{156}\) Skovholt and Mathison, “Resilient Practitioner,” 91.

conclude that the best way to improve a clergy member’s perception of their support is for those support structures to make a clear showing of support. This study focuses narrowly upon the importance of demonstrations of support as pivotal for ministers at the outset of their ministry. A minister’s emergence into ministry is the point at which they are “sent” into their mission field and typically includes an ecclesiastical affirmation, such as an ordination or other commissioning ceremony that includes the Acts 6:6 formula of prayer followed by the laying on of hands.

The Specific Call to FR Chaplaincy

Biblically speaking, when a pastor is ordained or commissioned to serve the church, their calling contains a strongly particularized element, even while that commission is still universal. One of the hallmarks of a ministerial calling is its specificity in relation to a particular people. It may include an appointment to a specific church for pastors, though sometimes it may be for a specified duration. It is common for pastors to eventually move on to another church or position within their ordaining organization. Regarding missionaries, while they might initially feel a call to a broad region – e.g., to Africa or China – eventually, they will need to sense that the call is unique to one nation, one town, or one people group. It is difficult to sustain a generalized calling, and the scope of the call can be overwhelming until personalized in a smaller, often homogeneous group. For example, FRCs often express a specific calling to minister to police officers or firefighters but must eventually decide on one department or region they can serve.

Even so, chaplains ultimately realize that reaching an entire department is only possible over time and through one-on-one contacts with individual police officers or firefighters. The broad sense of duty to all personnel in one station can tax a chaplain’s emotional resources. Ministry happens one ride-along at a time, one conversation at a time. Police officers are a
naturally dark and cynical group, so the amount of time it takes just to become accepted within a precinct, across a broad spectrum of police personalities, and spanning twenty-four hours of shifts, makes for a long journey. To endure the slow progression of relationship-building that happens in FR chaplaincy, one must start out with a tremendous amount of courage and a clear understanding that not only were they called, but they were also sent. It is a core hypothesis of this study that a robust and enduring connection with their sending source is a firm foundation for FRCs that can create a buffer against the eventual burnout they might otherwise experience without this requisite support structure in place. This hypothesis points to a central, ongoing relationship with the chaplain’s sending source that provides an avenue for guidance, mentoring, training, and other forms of social support. While this means of establishing ministers within their call and attaching them to their sending communities is commonplace in the pastoral and missionary realms, it is not as common within the FR chaplaincy, and this must change if the church wishes to send powerful ministers into the FR frontlines.

The Francis Burnout Inventory

To establish a basis for the connection between burnout in FRCs and their relationships with their sending sources, the author chose the Francis Burnout Inventory as a quantitative measure of burnout in ministers. This model is an evolution of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a measurement tool that assesses work-related psychological health. Maslach, Leiter, and Jackson developed the MBI to assess burnout on three scales: PA assesses one’s perception of their achievement and competence at work. DP and EE measure a worker’s tendency to distance themselves from those they work with and their work-related emotional exhaustion or
overextension, respectively. The assessment presumes a progression toward burnout that begins with EE in workers, which causes a relational dissociation (DP) that then affects PA. It presents a twenty-two-question survey scaled along with seven response levels, varying in the frequency of affect from “never” to “every day.” This inventory became widely used among the helping professions and developed through several evolutions, including the MBI-Human Services Survey that eventually inspired the FBI. Maslach et al. created this tool to assess burnout in the helping fields: nurses, physicians, counselors, police, clergy, and any of those who work closely in guiding others through difficult times.

Francis developed a three-step process of adaptation for using the instrument for clergy. He describes it:

First, where necessary, the original Maslach items were redrafted to bring the concepts and language in tune with the ways in which clergy thought and spoke, recognising for example that clergy did not generally refer to those among whom they exercised ministry as ‘clients’. Second, new items were constructed to bring each of the three scales up to the same length of ten items each, whereas in the original form emotional exhaustion was measured by nine items, personal accomplishment by eight items, and depersonalisation by five items. Third, the items were re-voiced to be assessed, not on a scale of frequency, but on a scale of intensity employing the established five-point Likert scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly.

While this adapted the study to accommodate clergy in its affect, Francis became unconvinced of the imminent progression from EE to DP to PA. Francis et al. utilized a balanced affect approach to these indicia in a 2005 study on clergy in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

---


The study confirmed that clergy may experience high levels of negative affect (EE and DP) while still evidencing high levels of positive affect (PA) - meaning that there is not necessarily an inevitable inverse correlation between negative and positive affect in burnout. This led to significant changes to the inventory. They created the SEEM and SIMS scales to assess EE and PA, respectively, via an eleven-question test for each affect. They scaled the affects not on the frequency of perception of indicators but on intensity, with answers ranging from “Agree Strongly” to “Disagree Strongly.” The hypothesis asserted that burnout (work-related psychological health) did not depend upon a single continuum but rather upon dysfunction of two separate continua, wherein the balancing effect offset when PA declined with EE and DP. Various studies have confirmed the internal validity of this test, as previously noted. The FBI was chosen for its direct applicability to clergy but required two more modifications to work for FRCs. The author contacted Francis and suggested two changes in wording. Francis graciously extended his permission to use the instrument with the suggested modifications. The author altered the wording in two of the questions: “I feel that my pastoral/teaching ministry has a positive influence on people’s lives/faith.” became “I feel that my chaplain ministry has a positive influence on people’s lives/faith.”

Qualitative Interviews, Focus Groups, and Surveys

Qualitative research comprises the most significant portion of this study. Interviews with all participants, including FRCs, TPCC Board Members, and sending source representatives, will

---

establish perceptions of the issues and collaboratively developed interventions. The FRCs will partake in the FBI and initial interviews to establish the degree of burnout the FRCs may be experiencing, along with their perceptions of why they feel burned out. Further, this study will examine FRC relationships with their sending churches, denominations, or endorsing agents (sending sources) and their perceived support level. The author expects that there will be a higher level of burnout among FRCs who do not have a sending source or an ongoing relationship with their sending source. He also expects that the intervention(s) chosen will ameliorate some of the burnout the FRCs are experiencing and provide hope for improved support and increased morale in their continuing ministry efforts.

The approach this study takes does not replace other theories or means of social support for FRC ministry. Instead, it is intended to help lay the framework within which other support structures can thrive. A call to ministry resting on personal conviction alone may not be enough to carry one through a career in any ministry, much less one that extends beyond the safety of the doors of the church, within which one’s theological acumen, teaching skills, and diligent work ethic might be enough to win a theologically homogeneous crowd. Church boards often choose pastors, congregations raise them from within, or outside presbyteries appoint them. These processes can bring an immediate acceptance within the body that is often only challenged by the pastor’s performance or personality. A hospital or military chaplain is often immediately accepted because of the familiarity of those institutions with chaplaincy ministry. While those clergy still benefit from a sending source’s ministrations and affirmations, the FRC must start with a vital relationship with a sending source that offers ecclesiastical affirmation – what the author has referred to, above, as “commissioning” – to have the best chance at ministry success and longevity. In the absence of previous research on this topic, the author is confident that
bolstering this support structure will provide FRCs confidence in their calling and continued relationship with the people who sent them to be the local missionaries to first responders in their communities.

The author acknowledges that researchers often use quantitative analysis to demythologize (despiritualize) human experience and provide a strictly psychological or material rationale for humanity’s responses to their environment. For example, it may be entirely possible to reduce studies of clergy burnout to mere neurological responses to environmental stressors and a corresponding lack or abundance of precedent human interaction that calms adverse chemical reactions in human biology. Nevertheless, the author presupposes that it is rational to believe that God exists and is as active in influencing human affairs as He is human institutions and human minds. If one believes, as this study and the science of psychology supposes, that we are engaged with other human minds, without empirical evidence of the existence of other human minds, then we must also be able to presume the existence of a Divine Mind that precedes the thoughts, and thus the callings, of human minds.\textsuperscript{162} As this paper will argue, the Christian presupposition is that God calls His people to a variety of ministry tasks and that the Scriptures affirm an external recognition of that inwardly-discerned calling, both by the church and its leadership. This presupposition is challenging to quantify. Given that statistical analysis speaks with a voice that has trouble articulating the human experience, especially concerning its correspondence with Deity, qualitative analysis, in the form of testimonials derived through interview processes, will enunciate herein where the quantitative voice tends to waver.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the intervention design of this study and provides an in-depth review of the steps taken in its implementation. The intervention design and implementation offered in this chapter include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The ministry context, namely First Responder Chaplains (FRCs) sent by their sending sources to serve First Responder Agencies, will be assessed considering the purpose laid out in Chapter 1. The researcher developed the thesis and problem statements in Chapter 1 to address burnout among First Responder Chaplains. This goal remains at the forefront of the intervention design. The current body of academic literature has not addressed FRC burnout examining FRCs as a stand-alone body of ministers. The body of academic literature reviewed in Chapter 2 will provide the foundation for understanding the problem in the ministry context, in general; however, the intervention design and its implementation will seek to address those problems unique to the ministry setting of FRCs. This study will shed light on how the social support structure of the church is essential to the spiritual and emotional health of FRCs, the amelioration of burnout, and the creation of a foundation for more effective and enduring ministries.

The descriptions of the study presented in this chapter will lay out the processes in three phases. Phase 1 includes initial data gathering to flesh out the problem, including a quantitative baseline assessment of participant burnout, qualitative interviews with those participants, and a focus group that includes chaplaincy agency stakeholders who will provide insight into the problem from their supervisory perspectives. Phase 2 contains interviews with sending source stakeholders and a second focus group assembled to develop solutions and tools to address the problem. Phase 3 completes the study with a quantitative assessment of the FRC participants,
final questionnaires given to both FRCs and sending sources, and a review of the study’s effectiveness in the eyes of the chaplaincy agency focus group. This chapter lays out the design as the researcher planned it and then describes how the plan was implemented, including several adjustments made mid-stream due to time, number of study participants, and COVID-19 considerations. It gives the rationale for participant recruitment and the use of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) as the quantitative tool chosen for the study. This chapter also addresses the provisions taken to secure personally identifiable information, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and secure data storage.

**Intervention Design**

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project is to create tools for FRCs, sending sources, and chaplaincy ministry agencies to develop better connections between FRCs and their sending heads that set a firm foundation for an ongoing relationship between the church and the chaplain. The researcher expects this will decrease the likelihood of future burnout the chaplain may experience as they conduct their ministry. The theological foundations discussed in Chapter 2 support the legitimacy of chaplaincy ministries outside the walls of the church. The ministry setting described in Chapter 1 elucidates the high levels of trauma that FRCs experience compared to their other chaplain and parish clergy counterparts during everyday ministry. The theological foundations also buttress the notion that chaplains engage in pastoral and missions ministries best served by some sort of acknowledgment by the local church or denomination. This acknowledgment should include at least minimal commissioning such as licensing, ordination, or endorsement by the church and may well be enhanced by a formal or informal ceremony that consists of prayer and laying on of hands by church leadership. Once again, each
denomination, independent church, or endorser must remain true to their well-developed theology of chaplaincy in First Responder and community outreach that guides the means and modes by which they send an FRC into the field for ministry. This study does not attempt to change the theological positions of each sender. Instead, it seeks to raise awareness among all parties regarding the importance of developing chaplains, deploying them into the field, and maintaining guiding roles as mentors and keepers of their spiritual health. The author hopes that this study will better develop these sending source-FRC connections and improve the professionalism, effectiveness, and longevity of FRCs.

Purpose and Objective

While this study seeks to address burnout among FRCs, it cannot address every possible metric of burnout. Such variables include an FRC’s hours spent in the field, exposure to traumatic events, lack of other sources of social support, personal issues, secondary employment, or a myriad of other stressors that may lead to ministry burnout. Instead, the objective of this study is to focus narrowly upon the connection between the FRC, their sending source, and how the sending source affirms their FRC’s ministry. Additionally, intermediary chaplaincy ministry agencies may require assistance in developing tools by which they can help their FRCs initiate and maintain vital connections with their sending sources. Thus, the author designed this study to meet the stated purpose of ameliorating burnout by raising awareness, creating assessment and informational tools, and developing stronger support relationships.

The design of this study is both qualitative and quantitative. The latter element develops a baseline for understanding the current level of burnout in each of the FRC participants. Phases 1 and 3 of the study both require the participants to take the Francis Burnout Inventory. Phase 1
establishes a baseline, from which the intervention is further developed and assessed with the second FBI iteration in Phase 3. As an action research project, this study also incorporates an intensive qualitative research element to gain further knowledge of the participants, any chaplaincy ministry agencies to which they may belong, and their connections with their sending sources. The qualitative component of this study permits each participant to speak to the issues and collaboratively seek solutions to the stated problem. The qualitative approach includes interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires that ask each participant to consider burnout in FRC ministries and share how they believe the foundational genesis of being sent impacts their ability to overcome ministry burnout.

Many factors impact burnout in clergy ministry. The testimonial data collected in this study explains what the quantitative data of the FBI cannot. For instance, an FRC participant’s FBI results may express that she is experiencing only minor burnout in her ministry. Still, it cannot show that her burnout results from chaplaincy ministry itself instead of ongoing marital problems in her personal life. It may also be true that a participant’s FBI results show a high level of burnout and yet fail to show the nature of their connection, or lack thereof, with a sending source. The TPCC Board focus group collects information from those with a long history of supervising multiple chaplains on the trends they have seen among chaplains who experience burnout. The Solutions Focus Group, developed mid-stream in the study, is designed to develop possible tools to help solve the problem. Finally, the inclusion of interviews with sending sources gathers impressions of church representatives about the problem and its possible solutions, as seen from the perspective of the senders.
Step-by-Step Tasks

The research portion of this study shall occur in three phases. Phase 1 includes the initial Francis Burnout Inventory/Questionnaire, the TPCC Board Focus Group, and post-FBI interviews with each FRC participant. FRC participants will take the FBI/Questionnaire while members of the TPCC Board will participate in the Focus Group. The researcher will conduct interviews with each participant that has completed the initial FBI/Questionnaire. Phase 1 concludes upon completion of the FRC Interviews and Board Focus Group. Phase 2 includes interviews with sending sources joined by their respective FRCs. The Solutions Focus Group was not part of the initial design of the study. As FRC interviews progressed in Phase 1, it became clear that several participants were interested in creating a solution to the problem. The researcher developed the Solutions Focus Group to meet this need. The design implementation section of this chapter discusses the Solutions Focus Group in detail. Phase 2 concludes upon completion of the sending source interviews. Phase 3 includes the second iteration of the FBI and a questionnaire that subsumes the final interview questions for the FRCs, exit surveys of the sending sources, and an exit meeting with the TPCC Board Focus Group. The author initially proposed to conduct a battery of interviews with all FRC and sending source participants as part of Phase 3. However, time constraints and the number of ultimate participants became a factor as this study progressed. The researcher concluded that he could more efficiently and effectively accomplish interviews with the participants by combining the FBI with exit interview questions in the form of a questionnaire, as had been accomplished in the first iteration of the FBI. The intervention design implementation portion of this chapter discusses this modification in further detail.
Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participant selection for this action research study included several discriminating criteria. First, the participants will be selected based upon purposive sampling among First Responder Chaplains currently active with a police or fire response agency. Second, participants must be at least eighteen years of age and members of TPCC or graduates of the PFCTA. Third, the researcher seeks to gain parity in male and female participation but, while it would be desirable, cannot guarantee adequate representation in the racial makeup of the participant pool. As noted in Chapter 1, the non-white number of FRCs is meager. Therefore, this study will likely not be able to consider the differing experiences of racially diverse groups. Fourth, the researcher will seek a participant group of between twenty and thirty participants, not including the TPCC Board Focus Group or the sending sources. Finally, the researcher completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) requirements to conduct field research with human subjects. The IRB approved this study on December 30, 2020.

Upon receipt of IRB approval for this study, recruitment will begin. The researcher will schedule an appointment to appear before the TPCC Board and present the in-person recruitment before the next training session for TPCC chaplains. The researcher will send the recruitment email (located in Appendix A.6) to all TPCC Chaplains after the initial class. If more participants are required, the researcher will send the recruitment email to all PFCTA chaplains. If the threshold of participants still has not been met after this recruitment, the researcher will send a further distribution of the recruitment email to all Washington State FR chaplains. The disseminated recruitment materials will indicate the criteria for participation, the anticipated length of the study of four to five months, the number of hours anticipated to take the FBI/Questionnaire and participate in interviews, and an assurance of confidentiality. In addition,
the recruitment email will include a participant consent form along with instructions for accessing the FBI/Questionnaire.

**Phase 1**

This study contains complementary quantitative and qualitative analysis in its design. Phase 1, the introductory phase, focuses on data collection and includes the quantitative FBI and Questionnaire and qualitative interviews with all FRC participants and the TPCC Board Focus Group. Invitations to participate will be conducted in person and via email. All participants will be required to sign Liberty University informed consent forms before being interviewed or taking the FBI and Questionnaire. The researcher will invite over 850 potential candidates to participate via recruitment email, including TPCC chaplains, the TPCC Board of Directors, and graduates of the PFCTA. In addition, the researcher included a list of FRCs from among all Washington State FR agency chaplains to bolster FRC participation. The decision design implementation section of this chapter discusses this decision in detail. Phase 1 should take approximately one to two months to complete.

**Francis Burnout Inventory and Questionnaire**

Participants will take the FBI and Questionnaire at an in-person session with TPCC chaplains or online through a Google Docs survey located at https://tinyurl.com/y2tckjou. The FBI and Questionnaire are in Appendices B.1 and B.2. TPCC chaplains gathered for a monthly training event will take the in-person FBI on January 16, 2021, at a church conference room where masks and social distancing will be made available to comply with CDC COVID-19 guidelines. FRCs will also join via internet Zoom video conferencing, and TPCC will record the training for other FRCs to view afterward. The researcher will read the in-person FBI
introduction, located in Appendix A.1, aloud to those chaplains present and will provide
handouts to each one. The handouts include the FBI/Questionnaire and the Chaplain Participant
Consent Form approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). These
forms are in Appendices B.1 and B.2 and Appendix A.2, respectively. The documents will be
collected in a manilla envelope and secured by the researcher on-site. The researcher will upload
copies of these forms to individual files within his password and biometrically secured computer.

The researcher will follow the in-person FRC recruitment with a recruitment email to all
TPCC FRCs and all PFCTA graduates, a list of approximately 800 chaplains, along with a copy
of the Chaplain Participant Consent Form, provided as an attachment to the email. The text copy
of this email is in Appendix A.3. This email provides the link to the Google Docs survey and
instructs willing participants to sign the consent form and return it to the researcher before taking
the FBI/Questionnaire. The Google Docs survey will include a video of the researcher reading
the same introduction to the FBI/Questionnaire that he read to the group that participated in
person. The consent form spells out the exclusion criteria for participation. The requirements
include being over eighteen years of age, a member of TPCC or graduate of the PFCTA, and an
active chaplain in a First Responder Agency. The researcher will exclude those participants who
do not complete the forms fully or sign a consent form from the study. The researcher will
remove the information of respondents who wish to leave the study.

The researcher will translate the in-person FBI and Questionnaire into the Google Docs
survey to facilitate collation with online answers for later statistical analysis. The researcher will
then shred the handwritten forms. Participants will be assigned coded numbers (P1, P2, P3, etc.)
to ensure anonymity in their responses. The researcher will create an Excel spreadsheet and file it
in the same password and biometrically secured computer with decoded information to track the
study. Upon completion of research, the researcher will destroy this spreadsheet. Access to the Google Docs results of the online FBI/Questionnaire will be granted to a statistical analyst to facilitate the data analysis. Google Docs provides additional statistical analysis in the form of charts and graphs derived from participant responses. Those graphics are in Appendix F.1. Upon receipt of the data analysis, the researcher will download the FBI/Questionnaire results and Google Docs analytics to his secure computer and delete the Google Docs page to ensure confidentiality. Upon completing the study, the researcher will retain the FBI/Questionnaires and consent forms in a password-secured storage device not connected to the internet. After three years, the researcher will delete those documents. Documents stored on this device will have all personally identifying information removed to protect participant confidentiality. The time frame for completion of the FBI/Questionnaires and consent forms is two months. This time frame will allow recruitment of the maximum number of participants, initially set at thirty, and will be permitted to overlap with the conduct of FRC interviews for those who agree to participate earlier in the process. Interviews may begin immediately upon receipt of the FBI/Questionnaire and consent forms.

**FRC Interviews**

The setting of the entire study will be varied. As noted, TPCC will determine the initial in-person recruitment venue for their training purposes. The researcher anticipates that, due to COVID-19 considerations and driving distances to participants, most interviews will occur via Zoom conference calls. Those wishing to interview in person will meet with the researcher under COVID-19-compliant conditions at public venues, such as restaurants or coffee shops, or in their homes or offices. The researcher will take care to ensure confidentiality during any interviews held in a public venue.
The researcher will allow FRC Participants to meet in person or set up an appointment with him through the online scheduling application, appointy.com. The researcher will drive to venues in Pierce County and South King County at the request of those participants wishing to interview in person. Those participants wishing to interview via Zoom will be permitted to choose from a selection of times offered in appointy.com. In either instance, upon beginning each interview, the researcher will read the First Interviews, Chaplain Participants introduction to the FRC, and obtain verbal consent to start recording the interview. This form and the interview questions are in Appendix C.3. Upon initiating recording, the researcher will state the name of the FRC and confirm that the FRC agrees to the recording. Upon positive confirmation of this agreement, the interview will commence.

The interview consists of eleven questions. Questions 1 and 2 confirm the FRC information provided in the questionnaire and provide an opportunity for changes or updates in that information. Question 3 begins a conversation about the FRC’s thoughts on the FBI and offers an opportunity for the FRC to explain answers to the FBI. The researcher will have a copy of the FRC’s FBI/Questionnaire to interact with the FRC’s responses during the conversation. Questions 4-10 assess the FRC’s method of entry into FR Chaplaincy and inquire of the relationship the FRC has with their sending source. The researcher anticipates that several participants will not have sending sources and will therefore be unable to answer some of those questions. Finally, question 11 is an open-ended question that permits the FRC participant to offer further thoughts on the interview or ask questions about the study.

The researcher will take notes during the interview in case the recording fails and will stop recording when the discussion concludes. He will secure the recording from either the Zoom meeting or the Voice Recorder application on his phone for transcription. He will use Microsoft
Word to derive a transcription for all voice recordings and copy the transcriptions to a file on his computer designated for each participant by their designated code. The researcher will maintain Voice Recorder interviews until transcribed and corrected for errors and then delete the audio recordings. He will transcribe the Zoom audio recordings and then delete the original audio and video files.

**TPCC Board Focus Group**

The researcher will schedule the Board Focus Group with TPCC Director Ben Harris at the earliest convenience of the Board. Harris agreed to recruit the Board for this study as a focus group. The researcher will send IRB-approved TPCC Board Participant Consent forms to the Board of Directors in advance of the meeting for recruiting and consent. The consent form is in Appendix A.4. The meeting will be conducted via online Zoom video conference, per the Board’s practice during COVID-19 restrictions in Washington State. The Board will record the entire panel, including the focus group session. The Board will provide the recording of the focus group to the researcher upon its completion for transcription. The researcher will use the introduction and questions in Appendix C.2 to introduce the Board to the study, gain consent for the recording, and conduct the focus group. The interview consists of five questions. The questions provide opportunities for discussion on Board member experiences with chaplains and their connections with their sending sources, how TPCC can help with those connections, and TPCC’s expectations of sending sources concerning their chaplains. It will conclude with an open question regarding thoughts or questions about the study or the focus group. The researcher will delete the audio and video files once transcribed and stored in a password and biometrically secured computer. He will then transfer the transcriptions from the researcher’s computer to a
password-secured storage device that does not connect to the internet. He will delete these files after three years.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of this study focuses upon qualitative data collection. The researcher will conduct Zoom conferences with FRC participants and their sending sources if both are available. Additionally, he will convene a Solutions Focus Group to discuss possible tools and solutions that could be made available to potential FRCs and their sending sources. The focus group products will establish the expectations each party might have concerning the role of the sending source in preparing the FRC for ministry and the ongoing relationship they must have to ensure ministry success and longevity. Phase 2 should take approximately one month to complete and may overlap slightly with Phase 1. Some chaplains may take longer to complete their required interviews, and chaplains interviewed early in the process may be ready to meet with their sending sources before Phase 1 is complete.

Sending Source Conference

At the outset of Phase 2, the researcher will send a recruitment email to each sending source. The original design of this study includes the conduct of a separate interview with the sending source, followed by a combined meeting with both the sending source and their FRC. The researcher determined that both the time commitment required of the sending source and the extra layer of interviewing were unnecessary to the goals of this study. Therefore, the researcher will conduct one interview with both parties. That email is in Appendix D.1. The email will contain the Sending Source Consent Form, located in Appendix A.5, as an attachment and request that those willing to participate must reply with a signed copy of the informed consent
and set up an appointment via the appointy.com website. All sending source conferences will include the FRC if they are available and will use Zoom video conferencing. Once coordination is made and an appointment time settled, the researcher will send a Zoom invitation to the sending source and the FRC indicating the date, time, and connection requirements for the meeting. The researcher will attach a copy of the interview questions in advance to provide the sending source representative ample time to develop responses to the questions.

Once the Zoom session begins and all parties are online, the researcher will confirm all parties’ willingness to have the session recorded and, upon receiving positive affirmation, will start the recording. The researcher will then conduct the interview, providing time for input from both the sending source and FRC to each question. The researcher will take notes on his computer in case the recordings fail or are otherwise lost. Upon completing the interview, the researcher will stop the recording and save the converted data in a file containing the chaplain participant’s code. He will then transcribe the audio recording via Word transcription and delete the audio and video recordings from the computer. Finally, the researcher will thank the participants for their input and will inform the sending source that they may expect an emailed exit questionnaire instead of a final exit interview in the proceeding weeks.

**Solutions Focus Group**

The Solutions Focus Group is an addition to the original design of this study. However, during the interviews, the researcher noted that several participants wished to become more active in finding solutions to the problem. Therefore, the researcher selected several of the participants to join the group. The selection criteria include participant experience in chaplaincy and church ministry, an expressed desire to find solutions offered during first FRC interviews, and leadership positions in chaplaincy organizational agencies (COAs). The researcher will
conduct this focus group in two stages. Stage one will include a Zoom conference call with the participants in which an open discussion will solicit solutions to the problem identified in Chapter 1. The introduction and considerations for the open dialogue are in Appendix D.3. The participants will conduct Stage two without the researcher to discuss solutions further and develop practical means, steps, and tools to be utilized as a part of the solution. The researcher will conduct the Zoom conference call in the same manner previously noted, with the recordings and transcriptions likewise handled as noted. The researcher will then direct the participants to establish a meeting on their own and submit the results – notes, tools, plans – from their discussion to the researcher once they are complete. How and when this focus group meets will be left up to the group to decide. The researcher will keep all materials in a computer file and remove all personally identifiable information before adding these materials to the study.

Phase 3

Phase 3 will commence only upon the completion of Phase 2. The rationale for this hard break between phases is that it is essential to complete the sending source interviews prior to sending the exit questionnaires to the sending sources and the FRC participants’ completing the second iteration of the FBI/Questionnaire. Thus, phase 3 will include three elements: The first is the sending source exit questionnaire, the second is the final TPCC Board Focus Group, and the third is the second iteration of the FBI/Questionnaire the FRC participants will complete. Phase 3 should take approximately one month to complete and concludes upon the execution and filing of the FBI/Questionnaires, sending source questionnaires, and Board Focus Group.
**Sending Source Exit Questionnaire**

Upon completing Phase 2, the researcher will send an email survey to the sending sources, asking them to respond to six essay-style questions engaging their reflections on their participation in the study. The survey will address how they perceive that it will affect their relationship with their FRC and their support of future FRCs in their congregation or denomination. The email text is in Appendix E.1. They will return the questionnaires to the researcher via email, and the researcher will copy their emailed response to a file on his computer. The researcher will delete the email response and redact the copy for personally identifiable information. He will retain copies for three years; at which time he will delete all documents. Finally, the researcher will express his gratitude to the sending sources for their participation in this study.

**Final TPCC Board Focus Group**

The researcher will conduct the final TPCC Board Focus Group in coordination with the Board’s monthly meetings via Zoom video conference. The researcher will ask the Director of TPCC to record the focus group session and send a copy to him via email. At the start of the focus group, the researcher will ensure that Board members who participate will have an informed consent form on record and gain verbal permission from all members to record the focus group. The researcher will read the introduction and initiate discussion using the questions located in Appendix E.2. The researcher will thank the Board for their participation in this study. The researcher will transcribe the audio of the focus group and maintain the transcription in a file on his computer, deleting the audio and video copies. The researcher does not control the copies of video files of the focus group retained by TPCC for its archival records as a Board meeting.
Second FBI and Questionnaire

The researcher will send an email to all FRC participants directing them to go to https://tinyurl.com/4ynr98s8 and complete the FBI and Questionnaire on the Google Docs page. The Google Docs page will include a video introduction, two initial questions (one requesting their name and a multiple-choice question asking for their present perceived level of burnout, as a follow-up from the first FBI response), the twenty-two question FBI, and a series of five essay-style questions originally intended for exit interviews. The Second FBI/Questionnaire is in Appendix E.4, and the introduction read by the researcher in the video is in Appendix E.3. As noted above, the researcher concluded he could make this modification, combining exit interview questions with the FBI, without compromising the integrity of the conduct of the study. The time to schedule interviews and the workload required to transcribe and sort interview questions were significant factors in this decision. The researcher may reserve the opportunity to call individual FRCs to clarify any answers provided on this questionnaire. Once all FRC participants have completed the Google Docs FBI/Questionnaire, the researcher will download the answers and all statistical analyses and retain the results in a file on his password and biometrically protected computer. The researcher will then delete the Google Docs page. The researcher will send the responses to an independent social sciences data analyst for statistical analysis. The analyst will compare them to the original FBI/Questionnaire to validate this study’s hypotheses. The researcher will redact personally identifying information from the responses and retain the data in a password-protected, encrypted, external data storage device. The researcher will destroy this information after three years.
Tools and Handouts Utilized

The primary tool utilized in this study is the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). Leslie Francis developed the FBI to address the balanced affect approach created in 2005 by Francis et al., as discussed at the end of Chapter 2. Instead of presuming an automatic progression of an increase in EE leading to an increase in DP resulting in a decline in PA, balanced affect indicates that where clergy may experience high EE and DP, they often experience high PA. Clergy members may be exhausted but also enjoying what they do amidst it all. The FBI consists of two eleven-question sections that assess clergy EE and PA. To evaluate other factors in this study, the researcher has added a demographic questionnaire in the first iteration of the FBI. The questionnaire includes one question that is carried over into the second FBI: “I am presently experiencing burnout in my chaplaincy ministry.” Participants may answer: “to a great extent,” “to some extent,” “to a small extent,” or “not at all.” This stand-alone question assesses the FRC’s perceived level of burnout at the beginning and end of the research portion of this study. Other information included in the questionnaire consists of the age of the FRC, their years in ministry, the amount of support they receive from a sending source, the presence or absence of a sending source, and their overall experience in pastoral ministry. The researcher will factor in the responses about their perception of burnout in their FR ministries. The researcher will hand out a paper version of the FBI and Questionnaire at the initial training event for TPCC. However, he anticipates that most participants will fill out the online FBI/Questionnaire. The researcher did not initially develop other tools or handouts for this study but expects that participants may develop tools and proffer solutions to the presenting problem during the study.
Data Collection, Consent, Privacy, and Security of Personal Information

Triangulated data collection for this study will consist of forms filled out at the in-person FBI/Questionnaire event, the FBI/Questionnaires completed online, interviews conducted in person, surveys completed via email, and interviews, conferences, and focus groups. The researcher will convert all in-person handouts from the initial, in-person FBI/Questionnaire to the online FBI/Questionnaire format to collate answers for quantitative analysis. He will scan and file the paper consent forms into the researcher’s computer and then shred all paper forms. The researcher will likewise store all electronically derived data on the researcher’s computer. Personally identifying data will be removed from stored media files and replaced with a coded identifier, the code key to which will be stored separately in hard-copy media in a locked drawer with the researcher upon completion of the research phase of the study. All electronic forms, including emails, downloaded online forms, consent forms, and scanned forms, will be maintained in the researcher’s computer and transferred to a mobile, encrypted data storage device disconnected from the internet. The researcher will keep this device in a locked drawer with the researcher for three years before deleting the data. The researcher’s computer is a password and biometrically secured device that will remain with the researcher or be kept in a locked container. All data and information included in this study will have personally identifying information removed to protect participants’ privacy. Those who initially agree to join the study and then express a desire to remove themselves from participation, who provide incomplete responses, or who fail to provide signed consent forms will be removed from the study. The researcher will destroy all records and documents connected with them, both paper and electronic. The Liberty University IRB approved the consent forms used in this study. Appendices A.2, A.4, and A.5 contain copies of these forms.
Study Products

The researcher anticipates the generation of the following study products:

1) Francis Burnout Inventory. This quantitative tool will be given to each FRC participant, first in Phase 1 as a baseline assessment and then again in Phase 3 to assess the effectiveness of the intervention.
2) FRC Questionnaires. FRCs will complete questionnaires with the FBI in both Phase 1 and 3. The first questionnaire will collect demographic data from each participant. In contrast, the second questionnaire will include exit interrogatives to gain participant impressions of the impact of the study on their ministries and their connections with their sending sources.
3) Sending Source Questionnaires. In Phase 3, sending sources will complete an emailed questionnaire designed to assess their impressions of the impact of the study on their understanding of FRC ministries and their perceptions of the study’s impact on their connections with their FRCs.
4) Interviews and conferences. The researcher will create transcriptions of interviews with FRCs (Phase 1) and conferences with FRCs and their sending sources (Phase 2), both in-person and via Zoom video conference, for qualitative analysis during this study.
5) TPCC Board Focus Group. The researcher will create transcriptions of focus groups in Phases 1 and 3 from Zoom video conferences with the TPCC Board of Directors.
6) Solutions Focus Group. The researcher will collect a transcription from an initial focus group with study participants and the focus group’s independent meeting notes and solutions tools and suggestions.

Ethical Considerations

The author of this study acknowledges the sensitive nature of the stories and struggles of FRCs engaged in direct ministry with First Responders and the families and communities they serve. Therefore, the author will protect information from accounts offered during interviews that could be traced back to the FRC and the recipients of their ministrations. He will redact the names of police or fire agencies, and details of traumatic incidents will be generalized to this end. Further, the entirety of the research phase of this study will occur during various stages of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, regulations, and lockdowns. The author will make every effort to abide by appropriate Washington State mandates to ensure that participants’ wishes regarding masking, social distancing, and other factors are honored. To this end, Zoom video conferencing
will be the primary mode of communication utilized in this study. However, in-person interviews are not ruled out and will be considered and arranged on a case-by-case basis. Finally, the researcher will always respect the theological sovereignty of participants by avoiding any attempt to manipulate their theological understanding of issues pertaining to ordination and calling or means and modes of First Responder ministry. The author expresses his deep gratitude for each participant’s willingness to further the emerging profession of FR chaplaincy for this and future generations.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The Liberty University IRB granted permission to the author to proceed with this study on December 30, 2020. Due to various unanticipated scheduling issues with participants, Phase 1 took just over two months to complete and included the TPCC Board Focus Group and the recruitment of twenty-seven participants who completed the FBI/Questionnaire and interviews with the researcher. Phase 2 took just over one month and included Zoom conferences with ten sending sources, eight of which had their FRCs join in the call, and a two-part Solutions Focus Group convening with four participants joining to develop tools and suggestions to address the problem. Phase 3 took two months to complete and included the conduct of an exit TPCC Board Focus Group, the final FBI and exit questionnaire for the twenty-seven FRC participants, and an emailed survey sent to the ten sending source participants. The researcher implemented modifications as the study progressed. The Liberty University IRB approved the changes on April 23, 2021, and this chapter includes a further discussion of the rationale for the changes.
It is essential at this stage to note that the author developed several hypotheses at the close of the literature analysis, each of which will be tested and reported as to their validity in Chapter 4:

Hypothesis 1: A higher rate of burnout may be expected among those FRCs with a limited or shallow connection with their sending sources, as well as for those with no sending source.

Hypothesis 2: Sending sources that are more engaged with their FRCs might be expected to have a process in place for a spiritual commissioning of their ministers and a well-developed theological understanding of chaplaincy ministry.

Hypothesis 3: Collaborative meetings will net organic solutions that meet both the commissioning and social support needs of the sending organization and chaplain, creating a perception of reduced EE/DP and increased PA.

Hypothesis 4: Scores on the second FBI will indicate a decrease in EE/DP and an increase in PA, evidencing some alleviation of burnout.

Hypothesis 5: Chaplains and sending sources will report better connections and more substantial provision of ongoing support for FRC ministry upon implementing the intervention design.

The researcher will assess Hypothesis 1 throughout Phase 1 based on the quantitative analysis of the first iteration of the FBI and subject to modification based on the results of the qualitative initial FRC interviews. Next, the researcher will evaluate Hypothesis 2 in Phase 2 based on the sending source conferences. Next, he will test Hypothesis 3 in Phase 3 based on exit surveys of the sending sources and questionnaire responses of the FRCs. Next, he will examine Hypothesis 4 upon completing Phase 1 and 3 quantitative comparative analyses between the baseline and final FBI results. Finally, he will assess Hypothesis 5 in Phase 3 based upon qualitative reporting by FRCs and sending sources in their final questionnaires and surveys, respectively.

Many other factors may impact the accuracy of the quantitative analysis, such as years in ministry and ministerial ordination in advance of entry into FR chaplaincy ministry or the ability of a participant to focus solely upon FR chaplaincy apart from a full-time job or pastoral duties.
Additional factors, such as age, relationship to their sending source before becoming an FRC, post-traumatic stress encountered as an FRC, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may also impact quantitative analysis. Therefore, the qualitative analysis is crucial to helping this study speak in places where mere statistics may be silent. Lastly, the author recognizes that the ongoing conduct of the research is perhaps the most impactful of the interventions, as it heightens for each participant the importance of the issue of burnout. Further, it links the FRCs with their sending sources and challenges each participant to deepen their theological and emotional intelligence regarding the necessity of the support structure of the church in FR chaplaincy. The researcher launched this study on January 16, 2021, with the initial FBI/Questionnaire at a TPCC FRC training event.

Phase 1

The researcher had already been in discussions with the TPCC Director to coordinate TPCC’s participation in this study before initiating the research phase. The researcher made no specific agreements with TPCC other than that the study would maintain academic integrity by remaining independent from TPCC in all matters. TPCC agreed to assist with access to those FRCs in their employ and those in their database containing contact information for a larger pool of PFCTA graduates. TPCC agreed that the researcher should share no personally identifiable information regarding study results. The researcher agreed to provide a copy of the study upon its final publication. The researcher set dates with the Director to attend the January monthly training for TPCC FRCs to present the study and conduct the in-person FBI/Questionnaire and attend a January meeting of the Board to complete the first focus group. The Director extended
an offer to take before the Board a proposal to pay for quantitative data analysis to support the research, reaffirming a commitment to the independence of the study.

The researcher conducted the first FBI/Questionnaire at the January 16, 2021 training meeting of approximately fifteen TPCC FRCs, with an additional unknown number of chaplains joining via Zoom video conference. The researcher brought copies of the FBI/Questionnaire and FRC Informed Consent forms in a manilla envelope and passed one of each out to the FRCs present at the meeting. He read the introduction (Appendix A.1) to the FBI/Questionnaire and gave them the remainder of the two-hour training event to complete them. At that time, he collected seven forms that had been completed, with the consent forms. He placed them in a separate envelope, retaining the remaining, unfilled documents in the original manilla envelope. The researcher took the completed forms to his home office and secured them into a locked compartment, later transcribing the information to the online Google Docs FBI/Questionnaire for collation with those results from participants who participated directly online. He scanned copies of the signed consent forms using the Genius Scan app on his phone and organized the information of each participant into files on his computer.

On January 19, the researcher sent the FRC recruitment email to TPCC to forward to their email list of all TPCC FRCs and those listed among the graduates of the PFCTA. Over 850 emails were sent out to recruit participants at this stage. The recruitment email included instructions and a link to access the Google Docs FBI/Questionnaire and the FRC informed consent form (Appendix A.2). The instructions also offered a link for each participant to sign up for interview times via an Appointy.com link. This subsequent recruitment via email provided twenty-five more participants, bringing the total to thirty-two, of which five ultimately failed to further respond to requests to continue or requested to cease participation in the study. The
researcher removed those five and deleted any documents they sent. Thus, the total FRC recruitment was closed by the researcher at twenty-seven. The researcher coded the FRC participants as P1-P32, removing P4, P7, P17, P27, and P28 due to an express or implied desire not to participate.

The TPCC Board met on January 26. The researcher conducted the Focus Group for approximately forty-five minutes on a Zoom video conference recorded as part of the TPCC Board of Directors meeting. Consent forms had been sent out but had not yet been returned, save one. Six members of the Board were in attendance. The researcher read the introduction for the Board Focus Group (Appendix C.2) and received verbal assent from all Board members regarding recording the focus group. The researcher reminded the Board members that no information provided by any Board member could be used in the study unless the members filled out the consent forms and returned them to him. The Board members verbally consented and assured the researcher that they would sign the consent forms and return them to him. The researcher conducted the focus group panel questions, receiving excellent input from each of four members, with two abstaining from speaking. During the focus group, the four members who spoke later provided signed consent forms, validating their participation in the focus group discussion. The researcher transcribed the recording of the meeting and electronically filed the transcription in file PB along with the consent forms.

From February 18, 2021, through March 19, 2021, the researcher conducted twenty-seven interviews with FRCs. He gave the FRCs a link to Appointy.com to set up interview times and offered the option to meet in person or via Zoom video conference. Whether in person or via Zoom call, the researcher conducted each interview in roughly the same format. He read the introduction in Appendix C.1 to the interviewee and read each of the questions, giving them
ample time to respond. Second, the researcher recorded each interview, starting the recording after receiving verbal permission and ending the recording upon completing the interview. The researcher took notes during each interview in case the recording failed. Settings for each in-person interview included coffee shops, restaurants, and home offices, always permitting the interviewee control of the environment to protect their desire for privacy in the conversation. Third, the researcher made transcriptions of each audio recording via Word transcription and deleted the recordings after the conclusion of the research portion of the study. The recordings were corrected for transcription errors and then filed on the researcher’s computer according to the coded files for each participant. Phase 1 concluded after the final interview.

Phase 2

On March 12, 2021, the researcher sent out a recruitment email (Appendix D.1) to twenty-two identified sending sources. He attached a copy of the Sending Source Consent Form (Appendix A.5) to the email and gave instructions for setting up appointments with the researcher and the FRC associated with the sending source. Five FRC participants indicated they had no sending source. Of the twenty-two recruitment emails sent, only ten sending source representatives responded and set up conferences with their FRCs via the Appointy.com link. All ten signed and returned copies of the consent form. The researcher created separate coded files for the sending sources linked directly with their participant codes and stored consent forms, audio copies of the conferences, and transcriptions of the conferences in those files. Participants P1, P3, P10, P12, P15, P16, P20, P22, P23, and P31 each completed conference calls with the researcher. All meetings were conducted via Zoom video conference call. The researcher sent read-ahead copies of the introduction and interview questions (Appendix D.2) to each sending
source to provide them an opportunity to reflect upon the questions before the conference. Two of the FRCs were unable to make the appointments. The interviewer conducted the meeting with the sending source in those cases, with the knowledge of the absent FRC participant. When all parties had joined the Zoom call, the researcher reaffirmed the participants’ permission to record the conference and started the recording. The researcher and conference participants engaged the questions as the researcher took notes and offered clarifications to the questions where it was required. The researcher stopped the recording at the end of each conference call. He gave all parties instructions about what to expect for Phase 3 of the study. He then created transcriptions of the audio recordings in Word transcription and deleted the audio recordings at the end of the research portion of the study.

The Liberty University IRB approved one helpful modification to the study, the addition of a Solutions Focus Group. During the initial interviews with FRCs, the researcher observed several participants expressing thoughtful solutions to the problem and excitement toward fixing it. The researcher recruited these participants to become participants in a focus group tasked with developing tools that might educate and better link FRCs and their sending sources. Of the participants initially recruited, P1, P11, P12, and P18 ended up as members of the focus group. The researcher scheduled an initial Zoom video conference for March 25 with the researcher and participants. The participants planned a follow-on meeting for April 9 to work independently of the researcher on solutions tools. The researcher sent the participants an advance email (Appendix D.3) with thoughts on solutions culled from several sending source meetings as discussion starters. The researcher met with the participants and engaged them in the discussion, but the Zoom recording did not record correctly, so he filed his notes with the Solutions Focus Group files. The focus group met as scheduled without the researcher and produced two tools.
The group created questionnaires for chaplain candidates and sending sources that require both to apply more thought to the process of becoming a chaplain or sending a chaplain into the field. The two questionnaires are in Appendix D.4.

Phase 3

The focus of Phase 3 was to conduct exit surveys, questionnaires, and a final TPCC Board Focus Group. The researcher sent an exit survey via email on April 23, 2021, to each of the ten sending source representatives. The email with the survey questions is in Appendix E.1. He sent an email on April 26 to the twenty-seven FRC participants with the instructions and a link to the FBI/Questionnaire (see Appendices E.3 and E.4). The researcher initially planned both steps as interviews but recognized that the extra time they would require of both the researcher and the participants was unnecessarily cumbersome. He requested and received permission from the Liberty University IRB to modify these steps, created the survey for the sending sources, and added the FRC final survey questions to the online FBI. The approval memorandum from the IRB for these modifications is in Appendix F.2. The modifications eliminated the need for more appointments, recordings, and transcriptions, streamlining the final portion of the research phase.

FRC participants completed the final iteration of the FBI on May 24. The researcher presented the second FBI results to the statistician for analysis. An eleventh FRC and sending source contacted the researcher and requested to meet on May 24. He conducted the meeting after determining that the belated request would not impact the study’s parameters and might positively impact the FRC’s relationship with their sending source. The researcher then sent a final survey to the sending source and permitted the FRC to update their answers to the final
FRC survey. The FRC replied with updated answers. Unfortunately, the sending source did not return a survey, leaving the study limited to seven survey responses from eleven of the twenty-seven potential sending sources.

The researcher requested to join the TPCC Board during their May board meeting for an exit focus group, as initially planned. The introduction and questions for the Board Focus Group are in Appendix E.2. The researcher appeared before the TPCC Board for the final focus group meeting on May 19, 2021, with several of the board members participating via Zoom conference call. The Board secretary recorded the meeting and provided a copy of the recording to the researcher, who transcribed the meeting responses for inclusion in the study. The researcher sent the introduction and questions to the Board in advance of the meeting. He confirmed the Board’s permission to record their responses and read the introduction and questions, taking notes of their responses to each question. The board meeting recording was transcribed, and the transcription was retained for use in the study.

Data Collection, Consent, Privacy, and Security of Personal Information

To ensure the anonymity of the participants, the researcher deleted all voice and video recordings upon completion of transcriptions. In addition, he neutralized the transcriptions by removing all names and identifying descriptions from the transcripts and did the same with other study records to ensure no outside parties could identify participants from their responses in the study. He then removed all study materials from his personal computer, transferred them to an encrypted data storage device disconnected from the internet, and stored it in a locked compartment. The researcher will delete the study materials on this device after three years.
Data Analysis

The author of this study chose several methods of data collection to achieve data triangulation. The data include the Francis Burnout Inventory, given to each FRC participant at the beginning and end of the research phase of the study, interviews with FRCs, meetings with FRCs and their sending sources, a focus group comprised of the TPCC Board of Directors, a focus group comprised of FRCs to seek solutions to the problem and concluding surveys. The sequence of data collection used in this longitudinal study is brief, covering only about five months, and will help gauge the immediate impact of education and awareness on how sending sources affect the perceived burnout of FRCs during their ministries. The FBI provides analysis of raw data the FRCs provide and stands as the quantitative analysis function of the study. This data is subjective in nature, as each FRC perceives the questions in the FBI quite differently. To balance the quantitative results provided in the FBI, the data collection sequence includes qualitative interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and surveys that further parse out FRC perceptions of their burnout indicators and connections to their sending sources. The author chose to include sending sources to test their connections with their FRCs and assess the effectiveness, in some cases, of improved connections between sending sources and FRCs. Cross-comparisons of FBI data and the participants' qualitative responses help create a clearer picture of the problem, the effectiveness of the intervention design, and the resultant perceptions of all participants to the process.
Chapter 4

Results

The problem assessed in this action research study is that FRCs often experience frustration, isolation, and ultimately burnout in their ministries due to a lack of sending source support. The theological imperative underlying this problem is that the sending sources often do not theologically distinguish the nature of FRC ministries, do not treat them with the same consideration they give to preparing and sending others into ministry, and often fail to formalize their ecclesial affirmation of FR chaplains. The thesis of this study is that those chaplains who are properly affirmed, supported, and sent into the FR mission field by their sending sources are less likely to experience ministry isolation and will thus experience lower rates of burnout in their ministries. Therefore, the purpose of this action research is to assess and remediate the adequacy of sending source support structures among FRCs. An ideal result is to produce suggestions and tools to guide sending sources, FRCs, and COAs in ensuring proper affirmation and support FR chaplain ministries.

The author of this study developed five hypotheses by which to test the longitudinal study and its combined qualitative and quantitative approach:

Hypothesis 1: A higher rate of burnout may be expected among those FRCs with a limited or shallow connection with their sending sources, as well as for those with no sending source. Conversely, strong connections between FRCs and their sending sources should evidence a lower rate of burnout.\(^{163}\)

Hypothesis 2: Sending sources that are more engaged with their FRCs might be expected to have a process in place for a spiritual commissioning of their ministers and a well-developed theological understanding of chaplaincy ministry.

\(^{163}\) Francis, “Healthy Leadership,” 18. Here, Francis asserts that in his previous study of Anglican clergy, regular, disciplined engagement with supervision was associated with higher levels of PA, although it did not affect levels of EE and DP.
Hypothesis 3: Collaborative meetings will net organic solutions that meet both the commissioning and social support needs of the sending sources, COAs, and chaplains, creating a perception of reduced EE/DP and increased PA.

Hypothesis 4: Scores on the second FBI will indicate a decrease in EE/DP and an increase in PA among the FRC participants, evidencing an alleviation of burnout.

Hypothesis 5: Chaplains and sending sources will report better connections and more substantial provision of ongoing support for FRC ministry upon implementing the intervention design.

The data triangulation used in this study to assess these hypotheses and develop solutions followed a three-phase approach. The first phase included a focus group drawn from the Board of Directors of TPCC, participation by twenty-seven FRCs in the conduct of the FBI, and interviews with each FRC. FRCs also completed a demographic questionnaire during this phase.

The second phase included meetings with eleven FRCs and their sending sources and a focus group of five FRCs, including two directors of COAs. Finally, the third phase included a second iteration of the FBI with all twenty-seven FRCs, a closing focus group with the TPCC Board, and surveys taken by the twenty-seven FRCs and seven of the eleven participating sending sources.

**Baseline FBI**

The quantitative measure of burnout taken by all twenty-seven FRC participants in this study was the Francis Burnout Inventory. The FRCs took an initial FBI to establish a baseline response in Phase 1, then followed up with a final FBI iteration in Phase 3 to assess the impact of the intervention against their perceptions of Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment. The average age of participants was 60.96, with a standard deviation of 11.22. The average years in FR ministry was 8.31. Internal reliability scores were divided between the
two affects assessed by the FBI. The responses to the eleven-question Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry showed good reliability with an alpha of .887. Responses to the eleven-question Satisfaction in Ministry Scale showed strong reliability with an alpha of .909. The eleven items from each scale were averaged into one score. Item 5, “I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain.” was reverse-coded for consistency.

A paired-samples t-test revealed an overall sample report of higher levels of Personal Accomplishment (M = 4.21, SD = 0.57) than Emotional Exhaustion (M = 2.26, SD = 0.59). A strong inverse correlation exists, however, between EE (M = 2.26, SD = 0.59) and PA (M = 4.21, SD = .057), \( r(27) = -.72, p < .001 \). In other words, as PA scores increase, EE scores tend to decrease. This result stands contrary to the balanced affect theory of the FBI – namely, that individuals in ministry can, and often do, experience high levels of negative affect (emotional exhaustion) while still maintaining high levels of positive affect (sense of personal accomplishment).\(^{164}\) Notably, the sample of twenty-seven chaplains in this study may well be too small to conclude that FR chaplaincy differs with the balanced affect found repeatedly to exhibit balanced affect in pulpit ministry. This study addresses this further in Chapter 5.

To assess the correlation between support and exhaustion and that of support and satisfaction, FBI scores for SEEM and SIMS were compared with a demographic question, “My sending source provides me ______ support.” Answers possible were “No,” “Some,” “Much,” and “I have no sending source.” Answers were recoded onto a “1 = no support/no source” to “4 = much support” scale (M=2.83, SD = 1.19). Twenty-three of twenty-seven answers were valid for the analysis, while four answers were essentially non-responsive. This iteration of the FBI revealed sending source support and exhaustion, \( r (23) = -.21, p = .33 \), and sending source

---

\(^{164}\) Francis, “*Healthy Leadership,*” 8-9.
support and satisfaction, \( r(23) = .17, p = .43 \), offering no correlation between sending source support and either EE or PA. Once again, the study will address correlations between support and satisfaction or exhaustion more fully in Chapter 5.

The author tested the correlation between age and levels of exhaustion and satisfaction, drawing from responses to both the Questionnaire and the FBI. Older respondents tended to report significantly reduced levels of EE, \( r(27) = -.38, p = .05 \). There was, however, no correlation between age and PA, \( r(27) = .24, p = .23 \). This is an interesting result, as the age skews toward the higher end. Sixteen of the twenty-seven participants ranged in age from 60-83, seven participants are in their 50s, and four are under 50. The youngest participant is 33 years of age, while the next three eldest in the under 50 category are 43, 44 and 49.

**Final FBI**

The same twenty-seven FRC participants took the final iteration of the FBI approximately 3 ½ to 4 months after the initial baseline iteration. Intervening study-related events included an interview conducted by the investigator with each of the twenty-seven FRC participants, meetings between the investigator and eleven FRCs with their sending sources, and a Solutions Focus Group in which five FRCs participated. With Item 5 reverse coded as before, Emotional Exhaustion (EE) responses showed good reliability with a .860 score. The eleven questions in the Survey of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) were averaged into one score, \( M = 2.02 \) and \( SD = 0.59 \). Responses on the Satisfaction In Ministry Survey (SIMS) showed strong reliability with a score of .934. The eleven questions indicating Personal Accomplishment (PA) were also averaged into one score, with \( M = 4.29 \) and \( SD = 0.58 \).
The paired-samples t-test for the sample of twenty-seven FRCs reported higher levels of PA (M=4.29, SD = 0.58) than EE (M= 2.02, SD = 0.59), \( t(26) = 11.02, p < .001 \). Once again, the FBI indicated a strong inverse correlation between exhaustion and satisfaction, \( r(27) = -.685, p < .001 \). The indication is that as the FRC experiences increased levels of exhaustion, they become less satisfied in their sense of accomplishment. A self-assessment question, separate from the FBI, queried the participants, “I am presently experiencing burnout in my chaplaincy ministry.” Responses included: “To a great extent,” “To some extent,” “To a small extent,” and “Not at all.” The responses were scale-coded 0 to 3, with 0 indicating “Not at all” (M = .40, SD = .645). This self-assessment revealed a negative correlation with PA, \( r(25) = -.645, p < .001 \), and a positive correlation with exhaustion, \( r(27) = .667, p < .001 \). The indication is that those who express lower PA and higher EE tended to perceive themselves as experiencing burnout in their ministry.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare FRC baseline FBI scores with their final iteration scores. Supporting Hypothesis 4, the comparison showed a significant decrease in reported EE, \( t(26) = 3.25, p = .003 \). However, the results relating to PA revealed slightly higher scores, though of insignificant value, between baseline and final iterations, \( t(26) = -1.15, p = .26 \). A possible explanation for this is a ceiling effect of high PA scores indicated in the baseline FBI report.

**FBI, Questionnaire, and FRC Survey Responses**

The twenty-seven FRCs completed the initial FBI and a demographic questionnaire in Phase 1 and a final FBI and survey in Phase 3, which yielded results captured in Google Forms charts. One demographic question posed in both the initial questionnaire and final survey queried
the respondents’ perception of their level of burnout. The researcher used the question to assess Hypotheses 3 and 4 across the timeline of the study. Each participant’s answer counted as 3.7% of the overall responses in each of the pie chart representations, as in figures 1 and 2 below.

Three FRC participants gave ad-lib responses to the questions. The interviewer addressed these responses with the FRCs during the interview portion of Phase 1 of the study. The FRC that responded, “I would say no…” changed the answer to “To a Small Extent.” The FRC that responded, “Had major burnout about five years ago.” changed the answer to “Not at All.” The FRC that responded, “Frustrated…” changed the answer to “To Some Extent.” Factoring in these changes, the percentage breakdown in Figure 1 becomes 58.3% “Not at All,” 25.9% “To a Small Extent,” and 11.1% “To Some Extent,” while “To a Great Extent” remained at 3.7% (or one FRC). The change from the Questionnaire to the Survey shows an increase of 3 FRCs moving to the “Not at All” category, while the FRC claiming “To a Great Extent” indicated positive change in their perception of burnout, as did one FRC claiming “To a Small Extent.” The overall trend is a significant shift of 18.5% toward the perceived easing of burnout among the participants. The author will discuss this further during the FRC Interviews section.

![Figure 1. FRC Questionnaire, Perceived Burnout](image1)

![Figure 2. FRC Survey, Perceived Burnout](image2)

Tables 1 and 2 below depict the comparative scores of each FRC regarding their responses on the initial and final FBI. The tables provide a side-by-side comparison of PA and
EE components. The top ten FRCs in Table 1, P20 down to P10, indicated their perceived burnout was from “a small extent” to “a great extent.” P16 and P20, at the top of this table, gave perceived responses of “to a great extent” and “to some extent,” respectively. The three FRCs with the highest levels of perceived burnout, P8, P16, and P20, each indicated they had no sending source. Only three out of the ten had a formal ceremony commissioning them to chaplaincy, though half of them are pastors or leaders in their churches. By contrast, fourteen of the bottom seventeen participants on the table had formal ceremonies or are pastors or leaders in their home churches. FRCs P29 and P6 self-reported “not at all” regarding burnout and indicated they had no sending source. However, P29 is the pastor of his church and considers his church to have “allowed” him to take on FRC ministry. The bottom fifteen FRCs in the table, P15 down to P2, indicated by responding “not at all” that they perceived no burnout in their ministries.

Comparing Table 1.1 with Table 1.2 offers a picture of an easing of EE and an increase of PA among most participants throughout the study, lending support to Hypothesis 4.
Two telling demographics emerged among the FRCs: the nature of their sending sources and their relationships to their local churches, as shown in Figures 3 and 4 below. Those with no sending source or considering themselves “self-sent” represented 26% of the group or seven participants. This closely approximates the number that the researcher found lacked a sending source during informal polling in his classes (approximately one-fourth to one-third of each). In addition, three FRCs indicated they had no relationship with a local church congregation.

Eighteen participants (or two-thirds) stated that they were engaged in some level of leadership with their local community. During interviews, these FRCs offered that their positions included senior or associate pastor, deacon, elder, or other ministry leadership.
When comparing participants’ self-assessed burnout with their connection to a sending source, quantitative data failed to show a significant correlation. However, during qualitative interviews reviewed below, the author found a negative correlation in the nature of the relationship between FRC and local church and their perception of burnout in their ministry, especially at the polar ends of the FBI responses. This analysis lends support to Hypothesis 1.

FBI: SEEM Component

Eleven questions in the FBI assess the Emotional Exhaustion component of burnout in FRCs. Regarding feeling drained in fulfilling FRC roles, response to the first question indicated a positive change from baseline to the final iteration. See Figures 4 and 5 below. In addition, participants either moved from agreement with the statement to disagreement or improved from levels of disagreement. While not entirely positive, a shift to uncertainty is at least a movement in a positive direction.
The question of daily fatigue and irritation showed little movement, once again with little room for change due to a ceiling effect, as initial responses showed few indicators of fatigue and irritation. See Figures 7 and 8 below.

Figures 9 and 10 relate to unexplainable sadness perceived by the participants. One of the interview themes revealed and discussed later in this chapter indicated that FRCs feel the weight of the sorrow and grief they deal with regularly. However, the FRCs themselves did not always readily identify this empathic function of ministry as a trigger for burnout.
Feelings of negativity or cynicism showed minor shifts within the negative response category, while participants disagreeing with having these feelings remained the same. See Figures 11 and 12 below.

Respondents showed positive movement regarding enthusiasm for their work, with an apparent decrease in lack of enthusiasm and a substantial increase among those expressing greater enthusiasm. See Figures 13 and 14 below.
Humor became an interesting discussion in the interview stages. Later in the chapter, the author will explain the unique nature of FR ministry and how humor becomes a coping mechanism for both first responders and FRCs. Many participants stated that they developed “gallows humor” during their time as first responders (before becoming an FRC) or as part of their process of coping mechanism development and ministry integration with first responders. Small shifts in this category are shown below in Figures 15 and 16.

Among those spending less time among first responders, many participants indicated that COVID was a factor in limiting ministry contacts. This may explain the mixed results displayed in Figures 17 and 18.
The perceived amount of support the participants first indicated strongly decreased throughout the study. This chapter includes a discussion of this phenomenon, as FRCs expressed some frustration with an inability to get their sending sources to return a call or an email. The lack of responsiveness may explain the increase in that perception indicated in Figures 19 and 20 below.

As COVID eased and some departments permitted more contact, FRCs regained a sense of normalcy. However, some expressions of frustration were about workloads between civilian jobs and ministry or with trying to run non-profit COAs while also responding to calls as an FRC. For example, see Figures 21 and 22 below.
The last two indicators of EE showed the most significant amount of positive change throughout the study. Figures 23-26 below show a striking increase in patience and flexibility among participants.
FBI: SIMS Component

The second category of questions in the FBI included those related to the FRC’s sense of Personal Accomplishment in their ministries. The first question regarding PA directly addressed the FRCs’ perceptions of their accomplishment. Their responses revealed the ceiling effect that the statistical analysis showed, with high PA indicated initially and a nominal positive change in the second iteration. See Figures 27 and 28 below.

![Figure 27. Baseline FBI, Accomplishment](image1)
![Figure 28. Final FBI, Accomplishment](image2)

Further illustrating the ceiling effect of high PA among FRCs, initial strong positive PA answers to question four on the FBI left little room for significant change. However, positive movement occurs among all responses over the course of the study. The same trend followed each of the remaining questions on the SIMS questions, save one. The statement, “I am really glad I entered the ministry,” saw an increase overall into the “Agree Strongly” selection, but two participants moved from overall agreement into “Not Certain.” However, Figures 29 through 46 show mild increases in PA overall, supporting Hypothesis 4.
Figure 35. Baseline FBI, Positive

Figure 36. Final FBI, Positive

Figure 37. Baseline FBI, Influence on Lives

Figure 38. Final FBI, Influence on Lives

Figure 39. Baseline FBI, Influence on Faith

Figure 40. Final FBI, Influence on Faith
The researcher conducted twenty-seven interviews, one with each participant, in Phase 1.

Only eight participants indicated in their surveys that they had no sending source, while...
seventeen stated a local church was their sending source, one was linked directly to his denomination, and one identified his sending source as an “other endorser.” Among the respondents there was some confusion about the idea of a sending source. In the initial survey, seven identified themselves as self-sent, while only twelve identified their churches as senders. Those who held an ordination or license as a pastor in a church showed less confusion and easily identified their church or denomination as their sending source. Five of the seven self-sent participants were pastors who admitted during the FRC interviews that their church was an ordination source and approved of their FRC ministry.

Sixteen of the participants indicated that they had received some form of formal ceremony, prayer, or blessing. Almost all of those were conducted with prayer and the laying on of hands in front of the congregation or a smaller group of church leadership. The remaining eleven participants did not receive any ceremony or formal recognition before the congregation or leadership, what the author has previously defined as an affirmation. Five of these FRCs received some form of endorsement from their church, typically a letter from the pastor or an associate, to a COA, simply stating that they approved them for ministry as an FRC. This type of letter does not imply that the pastor understands what the ministry of the FRC entails, but simply that they acknowledged that one of their parishioners required a letter of approval.

During the interviews several themes emerged that will be addressed below with responses from the participants. Central themes included responses to the FBI, affirmation ceremonies, church leadership affirmation, peer support, and ongoing support. The participants also added two secondary themes that this study will add to encourage future researchers to consider. These themes included women’s perceptions of church support and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their ministry satisfaction. Other themes arose that this study does not
have time to address, such as proselytization, contrasts between FR chaplaincy and other forms of chaplaincy, and church perceptions of FR chaplaincy. The author has removed personal, story, and agency identifiers from all quotes to maintain anonymity of the participants.

FBI Responses

The researcher gave each of the participants the ability to elaborate on their answers to questions in the FBI. The interviews did not address every question but rather focused upon those responses that were indicators of potential burnout. Each participant perceived the questions quite differently. The first question the researcher posed to each FRC was how they felt about their participation in the FBI and how that caused them to reflect upon where they were functioning in relation to burnout. Since burnout is often quite subjective, figuring out whether one is experiencing it is often difficult, as expressed by one FRC:

Some of the questions speak to feeling burned out. Overall, I definitely don’t feel burnt out. It’s been just over four years, so I haven’t been doing this very long, but this takes a lot out of you. I don’t even really pretend to know the benchmark for what it takes for people to start feeling that level of burnout. I certainly don’t feel it yet, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t days or weeks or times when I don’t feel like there isn’t a lot on my shoulders.

Another who had experienced burnout previously in his ministry saw the FBI as an opportunity for present reflection:

I felt pretty good about myself at this point. I was reading most of the questions as reminders of what to look for, because at one time when I was burned out I was the last one to recognize what was happening. Once you really get into it, you know, you’re in denial. So, this allowed me to ask the question, “Am I in denial or can some of these things be happening?” I think it would be a good thing for most of us chaplains to take (something like the FBI) every once in a while.

Another FRC said that the FBI helped her realize that she was burned out from her chaplaincy ministry. She stated that she had been afraid that her phone would ring for over six months. “I’m burned out of looking at dead bodies of people who’ve shot themselves. I’m not burned out
because my pastor didn’t help me enough.” Another FRC recognized that he had adopted burnout as part of his ministry: “I’ve had very little respect for a Sabbath and very low margins left over for me to have extra time. So, if I take a chaplain call something else is getting pushed out. Because of that I think I’ve been functioning at a low level of burnout essentially for a decade or so.”

The difficulty of balancing ministry and life was a repeated theme, as another FRC expressed:

I’m not paying as much attention to my own well-being as I thought I was. There’s a lot of talk about self-care because we talk to families and First Responders who are experiencing trauma. That’s one of the first tools we have in our toolkit is to talk about self-care, so that should be one of the first tools we pull out. I had lots of talks with an instructor at the Chaplain’s Academy (PFCTA) that set me up to be conscious of my own self-care. Then I think I’ve maybe let it slide. I think (the Francis Burnout Inventory) exposed that I’m not valuing it like I should.

Another chaplain said she responds whenever the call comes, even though she doesn’t have much to give because of her outside commitments to work. Yet another chaplain says the ministry doesn’t bring as much frustration as feeling burned out from running a COA. Speaking to the majority feeling that the weight of the ministry itself is the primary cause of burnout, one chaplain offered this:

When the tones go off, I’m still excited. I am motivated to do the job. I look forward to going and visiting the PD. I can’t visit the fire stations because of COVID. I come back from call-outs feeling good, like I haven’t missed a step, but I’m starting to feel the cumulative effect, some dragging down. Some of it has to do with that pressure on the species these days. I got checked last week and I have high blood pressure. It’s not been an issue before, but I’m feeling symptoms all the time now. I think I’m probably pushing it too hard.

The impact of secondary traumatic stress in FR chaplaincy is often an issue for chaplains in a way that it is not for first responders.
I was working out at a gym with one of our firefighters and I asked him, “How many dead people have you seen in the last month?” He said, “I don’t know. Maybe one.” I was like, every call I get is a dead person, you know? So, I realized at that moment the amount of saturation into this is really dark and it’s a hard place to be for me. I go to about one body a week. I could see 11 a week if I wanted to go to every call.

A chaplain who has experienced burnout added to the ministry stress a reminder that all of life plays into the cumulative effect that leads to ministers burning out:

It's never just chaplaincy. It's your whole life that plays in together. At least that's what went into my burnout before was because it wasn't just the heavy load that I was taking at that time. I was doing anywhere from 20 to 30 death calls a month, you know, a huge load, and there would be days when I'd maybe take two or three (calls) in a day. But then there's the family and there's all the things that go into your other life.

A long-time FRC with a PhD in counseling adds that he believes his self-expressed mild degree of burnout comes from subconscious insulation, as he has been distancing himself from the work and becoming a little more calloused in working with people. He states that he can muster the compassion he needs when it matters, but that he worries a little bit about what he might be missing before he gets past his callouses. Another chaplain mused, “Yeah, I think I’ve described it to my family and close friends: How do you do this job and does it have an impact on you? I’ve developed some callouses that I didn’t have before. I think at this point they’re appropriate callouses.”

On the lighter side, one pastor chuckled when he said that his foray into FR chaplaincy is an escape from the burnout he feels toward parish ministry. The crisis situations help him avoid getting caught up in petty squabbles within the church walls. His chaplaincy duties provide him perspective that he finds many pastors lack. An older chaplain in the group saw his mild burnout as a function of age that created a difficult in getting up at 3:00 a.m. for calls and dealing with the stress of sirens and high-speed pursuits. Another elderly chaplain stated that at his age, “it’s
just about God saying go do it and going and doing it.” As if anticipating the solutions this study seeks, another chaplain wrapped it up nicely: “I think you could develop an education piece for chaplains, as well as for churches, that would encourage them to find means of support because meeting people in crisis situations can be a bit draining.”

Of all the questions in the FBI, perhaps the most difficult one by which to judge FR chaplains’ level of burnout is, “My humor has a cynical or biting tone.” Many of the chaplains either entered chaplaincy from work as a police officer or firefighter and had developed a sense of gallows humor quite naturally with the job:

I always say I have a firefighter on one shoulder, and I have the chaplain on the other and the chaplain’s telling the firefighter not to go there. It’s the struggle of the old man and the new man, and the humor is part of that. Humor, to a certain degree, is important. If we can’t see something funny in all that sorrow…. It isn’t meant to be degrading to people but it’s just necessary. I’ve got to say that our humor is Sunday School humor compared to the medical examiners.

Others simply came into chaplaincy with a cynicism developed before they met Jesus, only to find that it equipped them rather well for ministry among first responders:

I have a naturally irreverent sense of humor. I’m not a church guy. I came to Christ a little later in life and I have a past as an adult, so I still kind of carry a bit of an outsider aesthetic, if you will. I think it’s actually served me being able to integrate with the men and women in the business. It’s been important to be effective in the job to gain their trust, to be able to engage in some humor with them. I’ve also found that it’s a release – the reasons they engage in gallows humor, the relief that it brings.

Most chaplains who responded with some agreement to this statement about humor did admit that they continue to wrestle with finding the line that keeps them from becoming inappropriate or letting their cynicism become a hurdle to ministry. Interestingly, the eldest chaplains with the most and least tenure as chaplains were the most likely to state that they disagreed with this statement. Eight FRCs of ages 57 and below agreed that their humor was dark, with only one below 57 disagreeing. Sixteen FRCs aged 58 and older disagreed that their humor was cynical.
Those who agreed had an average tenure of eight years as FRCs. The sixteen FRCs who disagreed had an average tenure of 11 years, with eight of them having 5 or fewer years of tenure.

The statement, “I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work” received only two agreements and two uncertain responses. While many expressed strong levels of cynicism about other aspects of their ministry, such as their sending sources’ support, few said they had negative attitudes about ministry due to the first responders or the community to whom they ministered. One chaplain captured his cynical view of community members well:

Everyone I’ve talked to that has done this job longer than I have – you know, law enforcement, the actual officers, and paramedics and firefighters – we talked about it and, to be honest, there’s a kind of cynicism…I have to consciously tell myself not to respond in the way you are currently thinking…It’s like I’m pretty sure I know all the things that led up to it and the poor choices that were made. I know what’s going to happen here and the kind of grief we’re going to see and I have to put on a little bit of a mask to serve that community. It’s undeniable that some of that comes from a callous that I’m glad is there. But I have to file that thing away every now and again. I can’t let it get too thick…I have to go back to Matthew 6 and 7 and realize I’m being all judgy (sic) here right now. I don’t know this story and all I know is I see a brother or sister who is suffering and kind of work at that callous a little bit.

Another statement that received few disagreements was, “I deal very effectively with the problems of people in my current ministry.” Only one FRC disagreed and three felt uncertain. One FRC referred to his dealings with the community as “transactional.” He stated that ministry with community members in crisis was often hit-and-run, with very little follow-up. He said this limited his ability to assess his effectiveness in ministry. Another chaplain summed it up: “I feel like I do so much so often that it’s hard for me to assess. You know? I don’t always get feedback. It’s like I pop into this person’s world, pop into this person’s world, pop into this person’s world. If I actually do the right thing, did I make a positive difference? I like to think so, but I’m not sure if it’s effective.” Another chaplain related a different type of frustration they experienced in
dealing with their first responders: “It's hard in the chaplain world, because there's some things a chaplain can't fix. So, maybe it's effective in the moment but that person still gives up that career or spirals downhill and there’s not anything I could have done. It always makes you wonder, like, well, did I help at all?” Yet another FRC discussed the uncertainty of ministry, adding, “Sometimes it's really clear that I'm getting things done and at other times – it kind of goes back to my earlier statement about getting into the head of people – I don't know. I'm not always sure that I've done any good in a certain situation.”

The frustrations of ministry can tax a chaplain in many ways. The two statements about flexibility and patience with people among whom chaplains minister received some comments that show these frustrations. “In some ways, as I’ve grown older and have more experience, I have to learn to be more tolerant and everything, but at the same time there are times I sit there and look at things and say, ‘Really? Come on. We’ve talked about this before.’” A poignant reflection by one FRC captures well the two worlds in which he lives:

I think the draw on my inner resources as a chaplain can be really deep and fast. Then I get back to my office after a call and I’m not interested in listening to somebody complain about what someone is saying at church, or a song we sang one Sunday, or which translation of the Bible is the right one. You know, you just kind of want to punch them in the neck at that point. It’s like, “Do you realize what just happened two miles down the road? How can you be so professional, so good at your job, and still be such a bunch of junior highers?” Then, with some families in the community I just want to dad-up on them and wag my finger and go, “If you hadn’t…you wouldn't have wound up here.” So I can feel withdrawn from those who I feel called to shepherd. And on any given day I would trace it back to (the knowledge that) my tank’s empty.

The same chaplain continued with an oft-expressed struggle among chaplains:

I have to, or it might be that I’ve chosen to, cope by creating categories. If you’re a church person, sorry, you’re going to get this, and if you’re in this other category, here’s what I have available to you. It’s all you’re going to get because it’s what I have available. So, I think maybe I’m going into the bag of cliches a little more often than I did pre-chaplain work. That feels like a decrease in
flexibility. Honestly, I would say it’s a decrease in being present with that individual – a sort of rationing of compassion.

Chaplains deal with sorrow and grief on nearly every call. Several participants expressed uncertainty or agreement with the statement, “I’m invaded by sadness I can’t explain.” However, lending credence to the high PA they express in the FBI, they find hope amid the grief.

How do you tip that scale one way or another when we’re around sadness all the time, and sadness on the telephone? When I go on calls, I think back to the verse, “The days of our lives are threescore years and ten; And if by reason of strength they are fourscore years. Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Ps. 90:10). We should be happy, but there is death all around us...I go to way too many funerals. I’m a lot sadder than I used to be because being a chaplain you’re around so much. It brings the certainty of it, especially when they’re all younger than you are. Then I pause and think about it, that it brings me closer to God, and I am happy. I’m not worried about death. It’s hard to explain, but I can teeter back and forth (from sorrow to happiness).

Another chaplain expressed the same juxtaposition of sorrow and joy in his ministry:

I was (just) sitting in the office with my senior pastor and we were crying. We weren’t talking about any one particular situation, but the astounding amount of grief that is underway. I happen to be the kind of person who tends to feel it. So, the reason that I answered that way is that I am deeply saddened, and I feel an increasing pressure and a weight at the same time. God’s faithfulness is rising. I mean, it’s the promise of the New Testament. It’s so faith-building that God is just so present. And so, there’s a joy that’s unexplainable, the presence of Christ is matching and exceeding, that there’s a new understanding of what I think Jesus meant by abundant life. It doesn’t mean more money and a bigger house. It means you’re going to cry more often, but you’re going to laugh more often. I didn’t want to say, “Everything’s great!” because it’s not, and I feel the pressure. I don’t know what the outcome is going to be, but at the same time I feel like God’s faithfulness is in a sense matching it and kind of pulling us along through it.

Twenty of the respondents replied that they agreed, or agreed strongly, with the statement, “I always have enthusiasm for my work.” Most expressed that the enthusiasm doesn’t exactly come right away when the call comes in the wee hours of the morning, as one chaplain noted: “There are some days that phone rings and I’m like, ‘Are you kidding me? I have to sit with another dead body for three hours? I wanted to make cookies.’ There’s always a willingness
to fulfill the call, but I would be lying if I told you that I was always enthusiastic. Sometimes I’m like, alright, it’s two in the morning!” One FRC expressed why enthusiasm isn’t always the proper response to those callouts:

When that call comes in at 3 in the morning, I would not describe myself as enthusiastic. The calls never come at the best time. They seem to come at 3 in the morning or 1 o’clock on Sunday afternoon, when my wife and I are settling in to go to a movie together or to sit and watch a football game…It is certainly easier when the loved one was 95, had just come home from the hospital, and passed. That’s understandable. But the worst one for me was the high school senior who passed away overnight for no known reason. I watched the family just be grilled by Major Crimes and then the Medical Examiner because they considered it a drug problem – and this kid was a 2-sport athlete headed to college.

Once again, twenty participants also felt that their ministry has a positive influence on people’s faith. One FRC called himself a “seed planter.” He stated that chaplaincy was not a ministry like evangelism, where there are visible responses to the message of the Gospel. Rather, he says, “I know what my role is. To bring Christ to a world that is fallen and broken, and how we're called by God to go out and share that with others.” Another FRC shared why he responded with uncertainty:

There have been times that I have gone out and ministered on a call and said, “Did I do any good?” And then, the funny thing is that I'll meet that person maybe a year later and they’ll say, “Oh, I'm so glad you were there. You have no idea how you ministered to me.” And yet, my own personal assessment of my effectiveness on that call was quite opposite. So, it's easy to say you’re not certain (about the effectiveness of your ministry) because you can't truly get inside the head and heart of the individual that you're ministering to.

Despite all the challenges of FR chaplaincy, twenty-four of the twenty-seven participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my ministry roles.” One chaplain captured the intangible nature of ministry that is hard to quantify in a study, yet drives the high PA that many clergy share of their ministry experience:
You know, there is a countervailing element that continues to regenerate me and keep me focused and purposed. Have you ever heard of the theology of blessings for obedience? The Reader's Digest version of that is that if you are true and purposefully obedient to the call of God, the Lord will be faithful to come alongside you, and regenerate you, and give you a sense of purpose, and give you a sense of joy in the work that you do. And that is one of the primary blessings for obedience. It's the Holy Spirit regenerating our spirit. That's a huge thing. It keeps me focused. It keeps me committed and it gives me joy in the work that I do.

**Formal Ceremonies**

Most FRCs in the study did not receive a formal ceremony affirming their chaplaincy ministry. Most of the chaplains in the study had already been formally affirmed by ordination or licensing for pastoral ministry. For many, chaplaincy became an add-on ministry to the pulpit ministry that was their first calling. As noted above, only three out of the ten chaplains who self-identified as experiencing burnout in their ministries had received formal ceremonies upon entering ministry. Conversely, fourteen of the seventeen chaplains who self-identified as experiencing no burnout in their ministries had received some form of ceremony, whether for their pastoral ordination or for entry into FR chaplaincy. One chaplain in this latter category, who had not received a ceremony, stated that he could see some value in a ceremony. He added:

> When I talk to people who have been through a ceremony where they have been ordained or commissioned, they don’t forget the day. They remember what happened and who was there. I’ve thought back on it and I don’t feel like I was short-changed by my church the way I was sent, but I think back on some of those people who have that recollection of that day and I think how awesome it is to have that, at least. I would love to go back in time and have somebody at (my agency) give me this tool to take to my church and my pastor and say, “This is actually what I want. I want to have a service, just like when we brought you in. I want to have a service to send me out.” It’s kind of a rock to stand on, an altar that was built, a day they can look back on to say, “I was sent.”

Another chaplain reflected upon the fact that, in his denomination, “hospital chaplains are sent with ordinations, degrees, and ceremonies.” He wondered why there had been no such sending ceremony for him when he became an FR chaplain.
Some chaplains can revel in the smaller ceremonies they receive, such as one chaplain whose pastor offered a prayer of blessing and encouragement to send him into FR chaplaincy. A chaplain who had no church sending source offered that the department for whom he works held a pinning ceremony for him that was very affirming. A chaplain whose pastor had previously served first responders offered him a private commissioning prayer. He added, “We never did a ceremony. I think that would’ve been good. I think I would appreciate that.” Another FRC emphasized the importance of formal ceremonies in his denominational tradition:

We had services for all (my various ordinations), but it was very important to (my denominational leadership) to make sure that my call to that role in the church did not abrogate in any way God’s call on my life to be a chaplain. I really appreciated that. That was something I asked for. That was something they came up with and it kind of cemented that I’m heading in the direction I’m supposed to be heading, and I'm being affirmed not just to be a (pulpit) minister, necessarily, but also that they recognize God's call in my life to be a chaplain.

Several ordained chaplains noted that their ordination was a “big deal.” However, they each noted that their churches provided no affirming event for their entry into FR chaplaincy. Extolling the benefits of a formal ceremony, one chaplain stated, “I think the more structure you can put to it, and the more honor you can put to it, it creates a higher bar of behavior and standards and an expectation within the community that I think would be helpful to the community.” A strong theology of ministry is applied to pastoral ministry, yet many church leaders fail to develop a theology of chaplaincy that includes the “why” and “how” relating to sending chaplains from their churches into FR ministry, as this chapter will discuss in the section on sending source meetings. One long-tenured chaplain explained his theological view on commissioning chaplains for ministry:

I like to use the term anointing, which is a very much an Old Testament concept. When someone was commissioned to go out and do the Lord's work, they went through a process, literally a physical anointing with oil. It still was a spiritual anointing from God to go out and do the work. And then, of course, it's interesting
that when Jesus sent out the 70, he didn’t do it so much by the concept of an anointing, but it was almost as if this was the first example of a true, Holy Spirit anointing and commissioning by Jesus, speaking with authority when he sent them out. I really look at being commissioned as a Chaplain with the Old Testament concept of having an anointing from the Lord for the work.

Affirmation of Church Leaders

The affirmation of church leadership is an important theme, especially among those chaplains who self-reported burnout and did not feel connected to their sending source or its leadership. Even tenured chaplains have experienced disconnection with their church leadership, especially when a new pastor takes over that does not maintain a continuity in chaplaincy ministry focus. One such tenured FRC offered:

My (original pastor) gave me the title of Emergency Care Pastor. It worked really well because I was tied in with the work of the church. But then another pastor came in and (my position) just disappeared. The new pastor knew who I was and just kind of swept me out the door so that my ministry was out in the street where he thought I was supposed to be. The denomination is behind me 100%, but the lead pastor is within my congregation. I used to be invited to the inner sanctum, even to the staff meetings, but not anymore.

Several other chaplains experienced this phenomenon. One expressed that her previous pastor had commissioned her in a service, with prayer and the laying on of hands. However, a new pastor took over that was neither understanding nor supportive of FRC ministry. That pastor did not respond to the researcher’s requests for a meeting during Phase 2 of the study. Another FRC stated that when she took over the chaplaincy ministry that a previous chaplain had established, with the blessing of the pastor and as a ministry of the church, the pastor changed the status of her ministry to “community service.” Yet another chaplain noted of the lack of affirmation from his leadership: “I don’t think they know anything. You know, they know that I do this, but we haven’t sat down, and I don’t think they have an understanding of what I do or why, or how it impacts me.”
Many participants underscored the importance of leadership affirmation of their ministry. One FRC expressed that she was unaware of how important it would be but now sees that it is: “I'm excited about the opportunity just to try. It’s also an excuse for my church to hear more about what we're doing. I don't think that they're as involved as they should be because I think they just think it's all handled. It’s all handled, but, you know, not really.” Another chaplain stated that she was called out late one night and sat with a family at a homicide scene for about six hours. She texted her pastor before the call, then showed up at the Sunday morning service immediately after she left the family. She almost fell asleep in the service and, when the pastor noticed, he acknowledged in front of the congregation what she had been through. She stated that his affirmation was a great boost to her sense of calling. After another pastor expressed his appreciation of the difficulty of a police chaplain’s ministry, she stated, “It gave me the confidence that I was being backed by a leadership that hopefully recognized the difference between being a police chaplain and an Army chaplain.” One of the tenured chaplains offered his feelings on the support of his church leadership and the church body:

If I did not have my senior pastor, elders, and other members of the congregation – if they did not have the kind of sympathy and empathy, and check in on me, understanding that I’m engaging in difficult work out there and say, “How can I help you? Make sure you take care of yourself.” – their love and support, boy I probably couldn’t do it. Just knowing that I’ve got this team of people who really love and support me and recognize it’s difficult, it is eminently valuable. In a word, I’d say it’s critical. Without the support of my church, I could not do this job.

**Peer Support**

Chaplain participants often spoke of the support they receive from their fellow FRCs as the most helpful form of fellowship in their social spheres. They often cited the ability to share with fellow FRCs experiences that few others would understand as a key to recovering from the
most difficult calls. Several TPCC Chaplains said that their best source of support was at the various gatherings of TPCC, whether for training, prayer, or fellowship. A chaplain who is part of the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) notes, “I would suggest that one of the greatest things chaplains can do is meet together on a regular basis, just to talk and encourage.” Such meetings have more than just comfort as their benefit, as another chaplain offered: “Everything I've learned besides going to the Academy, has been from my mentoring chaplains.” One question that is often asked about chaplains is, “Who is ‘chaplaining’ the chaplains?” Another FRC captures this thought in his comments:

I’ll be talking to them about how things are going in general, just to share information, and people will come up and say, “Hey, that’s a lot on your plate. How are you doing?” It’s so natural for some of them I have to tell them that I was sharing not because I was overwhelmed but just to share what’s going on. They say, “We just wanted to be sure.”

One of the reasons peer support is so essential for FRCs is the nature of the ministry they conduct. A chaplain said that he felt it would create secondary trauma for his pastors if he shared any of the traumatic incidents he regularly endures: “Just discussing what a hanging actually looks like… I mean, the vast majority of people can’t comprehend that. I would be hurting them by asking them to participate in my remembrance of it. I don’t know that the average pastoral staff is necessarily well equipped to support FRCs.” Another FRC shared the irony some chaplains face of having more education and experience than the pastors that send them, making it difficult to look to non-FRC ministers for support:

I’m working on my THM but not one of the paid pastoral staff even have an MDIV yet, so it’s one of those things where, you know, I joined as a parishioner, and I have the most academic theology credentials. I’m also older than both of the paid pastors. So, it’s kind of an interesting thing where the more experienced you are, the more difficult it is to find a peer to talk to or to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with.
Thus, many FRCs seek out support from other FRCs, rather than from their own pastors. One chaplain stated that she met with her senior police chaplain more than her pastor for support. She received no church support other than occasional meetings with her pastor but valued her senior chaplain’s support most of all. One of the senior FRCs in the study echoed this experience, noting that he has had a friend and fellow chaplain that he has been meeting with for support for over twenty years. He feels he can share things with this peer that his pastor simply would not understand or that might not be healthy for a civilian pastor.

**Ongoing Support**

When it comes to the need for ongoing support, however, the church and other resources in the chaplain’s arsenal are not unimportant. One of the FRCs experiencing higher levels of burnout shared this about her church support experience: “I’ve gotten zero. It’s always been zero. I was in a very strong church, but zero there, too. It’s always been zero and I don’t know where that comes from. Other ministries are more happy ministries – you know, going somewhere, flying somewhere – but a lot of people don’t like to talk about (her type of chaplaincy).” Another of the chaplains in the higher burnout category and with no sending source shared this:

I would say a sending church would be nice. It would be nice if I actually had a team of people praying for me. I’ve got a couple of people who know what I do, and other department members who are Christians. I’ve got sort of a support group of people I can call on, but I don’t have anything organized. I don’t need financial support from a sending church, but I really don’t have any pastoral oversight, either… It highlights the fact that we need, you know, not just accountability or financial support, but really just somebody to talk to.

Several FRCs stated that they had prayer groups from their church praying for them, and some were on their home church prayer list. They also stated that any other support they required, including financial support, was available to them if they requested it. While most of the FRCs are volunteers in their ministry, a few have groups, churches, or families who donate to support
them so that they can remain full time in their ministries. Other chaplains have retired from fire
or police departments and finance their own ministries with their retirement. One of the lessons
for all FRCs is the need to be involved with their sending church and proactive in seeking the
assistance they need, as expressed by one of the participants:

I personally have been involved in my church and have had one on one
conversations with staff members and others I know who would hold me
accountable if they felt like I was not taking care of myself, or if they noticed a
change in me that I wasn’t dealing with. So, I’ve just been talking to whether (sic)
those were pastors on staff or lay folks in the congregation. I just took it on
myself to talk to them and let them know what I was training to do and asked
them for that additional covering and prayer and gave them permission to hold me
accountable.

FRCs who are proactive within their own church offer benefits for the church, as well.
One chaplain was assigned by his church leadership to organize the church security team.
Another chaplain uses his firefighter background to organize a trauma response system for
nurses within his church. A recently retired firefighter trains his church in trauma and first aid.
Several chaplains have been asked to speak at their churches to share about their ministries and
expose congregants to some of the difficulties the communities in which they live and worship
face. One church has designated an FRC as their pastoral link to the community and relies on
them to be their eyes and ears discerning community needs for which they can provide practical
helps.

Lastly, FRCs find support from friends and family, as well. A chaplain reported that he
sought out three to four older men with whom he could engage for prayer and counsel. They
come from within his church and outside his church. His family is a great support for his
ministry, as well, and he has taken the extraordinary step of engaging in couples counseling with
his wife, just to keep their marriage healthy. Spousal support is a key for many of the
participants. One FRC shared his experience with his wife:
About three years in there was probably only one part that made me stop and think. I was having dinner with my wife and she just mentioned, “You know I’ve gotta tell you that this week I think you’ve been different.” I really took that to heart. Obviously, I’m a huge promoter of practicing what we preach about self-care. Other chaplains have said that if I ever want to reach out and just talk and pray (sic). Sometimes things come up and I always feel better sitting down with a brother or a sister to submit things to prayer and make myself willing to be made aware.

Whether soliciting financial support from the church for income, training, and gear; or seeking moral support from fellow chaplains when they experience a hard call; or finding prayer, accountability, or mentorship, FRCs must be proactive in building their support systems. Church members may not understand all that FRCs endure but every chaplain that stated they had a good relationship with their church – regardless of whether they recognized it as a sending source or felt affirmed by the leadership – said that the church was willing to help, if they asked. The key for FRCs is ensuring that they proactively share in ways that help the church understand the FRC mission and how they can support it.

Women’s Perception of Leadership Support

One theme that arose during the interviews was how women in chaplaincy ministry fared in relationships with their church leadership. While this is not a focus of this study, it demands a notation for future researchers. Eight of the FRCs that participated in this study are women. Only one of them is ordained and employed as full-time clergy. Three self-identified as presently experiencing burnout in their ministries, including one that stated they were experiencing burnout to a great extent and one that stated she was experiencing some burnout. Three of the eight are involved in their churches in ministries in addition to their FRC roles. One FRC notes that her church does not license or ordain women, yet the agency she serves requires an ordination. Initially, she was frustrated that her church leadership would not respond to requests
to engage with this study, however, the church’s missions director agreed to participate late in the process. One of the most experienced ministers among the women FRCs received strong support from her original pastor. However, after he retired his son took over the church and she found that the support dropped off completely. “They’re not putting roadblocks up to me, but there’s not really an acknowledgment there, either. I don’t need that. I get it from Jesus.”

Another female chaplain stated that she hasn’t been acknowledged by her church pastor, feels that the pastor is controlling, and doesn’t believe that he likes women ministers. Half of the women in the study expressed a level of confusion about how best to connect with a sending source to gain affirmation for their ministry. While this study is not set up to properly evaluate the roles of women in FRC ministries, enough anecdotal evidence came to light to merit an encouragement to other researchers to investigate the topic more fully and perhaps help future female FRCs better understand the pathways to ministry with which the men did not seem to struggle.

**Impact of COVID-19 and Social Unrest on Ministry**

The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic had a tremendous impact on FR chaplaincy ministry during the time this study was conducted. Many agencies stopped calling chaplains for any but the most traumatic calls, and some agencies simply stopped calling chaplains out for the duration of government-imposed restrictions. Most chaplains found themselves constrained from fire station visitations and police ride-alongs. Some FRCs were able to conduct meetings and counseling via electronic means, but most in-person contacts were severely restricted. In some cases, FRCs reported that this increased their stress. However, in other cases, the reduction in call volume allowed chaplains some recovery time, as well as time to focus on family or other work requirements, thereby reducing their overall stress. One chaplain reported that his agency’s
calls for chaplain responses had reduced from three hundred to only one hundred during the first full year of the pandemic. A fire chaplain noted that, while his call load had decreased, his support to staff had increased significantly. Another FRC shared his frustration:

I feel drained – more in a guilty fashion – because I’m not able to, the Department won’t let me, do the things I did in the past. I’ve had very few calls and mostly I’ve been handling them by telephone, which is very draining because I don’t feel like I’m doing what I should be doing. I don’t know what I should know just by looking at the people and getting a feel of what’s going on in the situation.

The COVID-19 restrictions have also impacted chaplains’ personal morale, with one chaplain noting, “I’ve been getting by. The entire year has been less than fun in every aspect of my life. But you know, at the same time you know God is still good.” Struggling with the effects of lockdowns and other limitations, an older chaplain reported:

So, a little bit of fatigue and being in COVID (sic). Once again, there's other things in my life. Not only do I have this little bit where I want to be out (from under all the restrictions), but I'm isolated to the point I'm not doing anything else, either – doing very little with all my family and my grandchildren and everything. I feel like I'm now really retired but can't do the things I want to do in retirement. It would be great if it was totally voluntary. Being told you have to stay home and not do much…it's different than staying home and not doing much.

On top of the pandemic, of course, has been the increasingly anti-police sentiment among some communities. While most small agencies have not experienced the same “defund the police” hostility, larger agencies – especially those around the Seattle area, where Leftist protests and rioting are more common – have been hit hard. Some, like the Seattle Police Department, have experienced deep cuts in their budgets and sharp decreases in personnel numbers. One FRC from an agency near Seattle noted that his department’s morale was very low. He stated that his agency is now working with one hundred fewer cops on the force, all while crime is increasing and COVID-19 restrictions limit calls for chaplain responses. Another police chaplain noted that both the pandemic and the social upheaval of the past year have been tough on cops and
ministry: “I have a cousin who’s a police officer in narcotics. I have only the slightest glimpse of the danger he faces. I just don’t get this whole anti-police movement in our society right now.”

Once again, this study is not set up to fully review the impact of outside issues, but these factors can potentially skew the results of the present study and are deserving of separate research, in and of themselves. There is little doubt that, as large city police departments lose personnel, crime rates rise, and police morale declines, both police and fire agency chaplains will feel the strain. As COVID-19 restrictions lift, it is likely that FRCs will find themselves busier in ministry both to their communities and to the police and firefighters that are on the front lines of the violence and discord.

FRC Survey Responses

This study included a survey with the final FBI for the FRC participants. Fifteen participants stated they felt that their answers were the same or roughly the same in answer to the first question, “What are your thoughts about the second FBI you took vis a vis the first one? If there was a significant change, to what would you attribute that change?” One chaplain offered some frustration regarding her church sending source:

The change would be in my thinking of the sending source. My lead chaplain is very supportive, but I do not hear from her unless I need input for a call. Since the first FBI, I have thought about my lead pastor as a sending source. He is silent to all I do or wish to do. It frustrates me because I don’t trust he would empathize or change his time for me.

Three more chaplains expressed some level of frustration due to COVID-19 restrictions on callouts and the ability to connect with their agencies’ first responders. However, there were many positive responses indicating that the study had afforded them the ability to reflect upon their ministry as FRCs. One FRC offered, “After taking the first questionnaire, I began to think
more about my position as a chaplain for the fire service. I started to see how appreciative firefighters are about the chaplaincy program and my role as a first responder chaplain. I began to appreciate more the privilege that God has called me into assisting those who are providing a service for our community.” Another FRC noted that participation in the study had caused her to reprioritize her schedule and build “a better work-life balance.” This led to her feeling “more at ease and happy (sic) than I was when I first took (the FBI).”

The second question asked, “Has your sending source affirmed your ministry as an FRC since the first time you took the FBI? If so, how? (If you had already been affirmed, simply reply: ‘Previously affirmed.’) If ‘yes,’ how do you feel this has impacted you and your ministry?” Of the twenty-seven participants, fourteen indicated that they had been previously affirmed in their FRC ministry. However, one added a negative note to his relationship with his pastor: “The present (pastor) was vocally affirming during our Zoom meeting. Besides that time, I feel mostly invisible since his efforts are more intentionally focused on staffing church positions than caring for a FRC.” Ten FRCs indicated that their sending sources had not affirmed them since they entered the study. Three of those chaplains’ pastors had conducted meetings with the researcher. One pastor went on sabbatical immediately following the interview without following through with his commitments to his FRC made during the interview. Neither did he respond to requests to complete the final survey. Another pastor had not opened her church yet, even after the government had lifted COVID-19, making connection difficult for her FRC. The chaplain that attends her church had not chosen to become a member at the church and had only occasionally contacted the pastor when she needed counsel. The final pastor to engage the sending source meetings responded late to requests to participate in the study. Although his FRC’s first answers to the survey indicated frustration at the lack of pastoral response, she
offered a glowing update: “We are definitely on a new path. They are open and willing to learn better ways to support us FRCs and (sic) looking into specific, formal ways to do this. This is thanks to this program and study.”

Many FRCs expressed very positive responses after their sending source meetings. One noted, “It has given me confidence and a strong sense of ministry calling.” Another responded that the affirmation he has received encouraged him that he is doing the right thing. Finally, noting the affirmation of the process itself, a chaplain offered that he “believes asking Pastors to fill out the FBI, as well as the interview process (sic), reminded them of the importance of FR Chaplaincy and heightened their awareness of the significance of their ministry.”

Answers to the third question were mixed. The question was, “Do you feel that your connection with your sending source has improved since the study started? If so, how? To what do you attribute this improvement?” Twenty of the participants indicated that no change had occurred. Only a few of the twenty stated that the lack of change was negative. The most positive response was from the FRC, who had pushed to get a meeting with her pastor and the researcher late in the study: “Absolutely! No comparison – completely better connection due to this study.” Another chaplain stated that there had been a positive change, though he previously enjoyed an excellent relationship with his church: “Yes. I believe there is a stronger understanding of my sending church’s ongoing role in supporting my ministry.” A third chaplain announced, “The pastoral prayer now includes me every Sunday rather than once and a while.” A fourth chaplain stated that she feels more confident in reaching out and talking to her pastors. A final positive comment came from an FRC who already had a good relationship with his sending source. He said they had taken the additional step to start a formal process to improve the FRC ministry in their church since the conference.
The fourth question was, “What other thoughts would you like to share about how this study has helped you, your sending source, or TPCC (if connected to TPCC)?” Many responded that the study reminded them of the importance of their support connections and raised their awareness of issues surrounding burnout. One chaplain stated that it opened his eyes to “how important and supportive my sending source is.” A well-supported chaplain offered, “I believe that this study will help future chaplains start and remain on more solid ground as far as affirmation and spiritual covering of their ministry from their sending church.” Emphasizing that sending sources do not always know enough about FR chaplaincy to keep their attention amid all of their competing church duties, a chaplain stated, “You were able to bring credibility and an outside voice for FRCs and the critical work they provide. The specific questions asked to the sending source were valuable because they’d never thought of it that way before.” Along the same lines, a senior pastor who is also an FRC said, “It’s been a good exercise in thinking more about how we vet and train chaplains and help sending sources understand and appreciate what chaplains do.” Adding to that thought, along organizational lines, another participant said, “When interviewing potential chaplains for (my agency), I now include more questions about their sending source and (information on) how important that is for a successful FRC career.”

The final question was an open question, inviting participants to offer any other comments about their participation in the study. Most did not direct their responses at the study, but one FRC offered a helpful comment: “Having the study as a sort of self-check-in was really helpful. I feel like periodic assessment tools could help me identify early signs of burnout faster.” Another chaplain helped close out the survey responses with a positive thought: “I feel that my church is aware of my ministry and supports it. Other churches may not have the same
understanding. This study may help to bring awareness of the FRC program and a willingness to spiritually, emotionally, and financially support the program.”

TPCC Board of Directors Focus Groups and Solutions Focus Group

The researcher conducted focus groups with the TPCC Board of Directors in Phases 1 and 3 of the study. The focus groups provided information from a COA that acts as an intermediary between police and fire agencies and the FRC sending sources. These agencies often provide recruiting, vetting, training, and placement for FRCs. COAs are parachurch organizations, often established as non-profit groups, that offer chaplains from defined geographic regions, larger FR agencies, or ecumenical religious groups. They offer services that vary from simple fellowship opportunities to a range of administrative supports such as those that TPCC provides. The TPCC Board expressed interest in this study after learning it would address many of the issues with which they had already been wrestling. The researcher developed the questions posed to the Board to facilitate open discussion rather than to solicit direct answers to individual queries. This section will capture the general discussions of both the first and final focus groups.

Seeing an interest among the FRCs to develop solutions to both the connection between chaplains and their sending sources and the accountability of the accessioning process for FRCs coming out of churches, the researcher requested that several FRC participants and the TPCC Board Director participate in a Solutions Focus Group. The group met twice. The researcher led the discussion in the first meeting and then permitted the group to independently conduct a second meeting to allow them the freedom to collaborate on possible solutions. This section will conclude with the results of their efforts.
First Board Focus Group

The first comment in the discussion addressed the essential relationships between TPCC, sending source churches, and FRCs: “We, or even the (PFCTA) academy, rely upon the chaplain’s relationship what their church body. We assume that it is robust, that they take the opportunity to grow, that they engage in opportunities to be trained, supported, and encouraged.”

Another commented, “There was an important topic that came up about a year ago when we were kind of looking at this: What is the chaplain’s connection to their sending church? It drew out the issue that TPCC is a parachurch organization, not a church.” A significant point emerged, namely that the church is largely insulated from governmental regulation. Thus, two acknowledgments should guide a COA: First, they are not churches. They cannot legally organize as a church and therefore should, as one Board member put it, “stay within its lane.” Another participant in the group stated, “We are working on strengthening that connection between the chaplains and their church and TPCC to close the loop…to make sure the chaplains are adequately covered and understand that TPCC doesn’t exist to replace that (relationship between the chaplain and their church).”

Second, as a multi-denominational organization, they must rely upon churches to take on the ecclesial responsibility of preparing their chaplains for ministry according to their denominational doctrines and practices. The Board emphasized that they are not a licensing or ordaining body. It is up to churches to provide the theological training and qualification that their tradition requires. Too often in the past, all that some churches provided was a perfunctory pastoral letter of recommendation. This left in question whether pastors truly knew the ministry to which they were sending the FRC or whether they were fully qualified to conduct such a ministry. One Board member captured it this way after speaking with local pastors:
I had conversations with a lot of our area churches and asked them, “Hey, if you have sent somebody to TPCC to serve in this mission field, what’s your understanding of the relationship that we have with you and that you have with them?” A lot of the pastors had a very consistent message. They said, “Well, we don’t even know really what to expect. We don’t even have a good understanding of what they’re getting themselves into.” So, I think a lot of it isn’t necessarily the level of seriousness that they send them off with, but maybe they think, “This a 40- to 50-year-old organization that is taking my parishioners under their wing and sending them out in the mission field. I’m good.” That’s a big disconnect that I’ve noticed.

The Board expressed its need to keep close relationships with churches while remaining distinct in its primary function and educating churches on theirs. Churches are afforded significant protections under the Constitution in that they cannot be compelled by law to abandon their beliefs or practices. Parachurch ministries often face greater legal challenges to faith-based policies and procedures than do churches. Remaining close to the greater church culture, particularly by giving churches and denominations control of their chaplains and policies, insulates COAs from lawsuits and other challenges to how they conduct their parachurch ministry.

The Board also spoke to the spiritual importance of encouraging better connections between chaplains and their sending sources, the quality of which connections are often evidenced by how the chaplains are initially prepared and sent. “I’ve seen some of the sending churches give us a very robust send-off. It’s something that they speak directly to as far as the ongoing commitment to the spiritual growth and covering they’re going to provide the chaplain.” The church often expresses that commitment by “the laying on of hands in a ceremony to send them off with that awareness of their covering and blessing.” As the TPCC Director stated, “My goal is not to dictate to them what their theology should be, but to help them come up with a better process.”
In a day where, as one Board member put it, “there’s a lot more fluidity in terms of who is a pastor, where they’re serving, and how they’re serving,” churches must establish more explicit qualifications for their chaplains, even as FR agencies are demanding more in relation to FRC credentials and training, and as FR chaplaincy is emerging as a ministry profession. However, initial qualification is not where support ends. The Board expressed that maintaining a long-term connection between FRC and sending source is particularly necessary for FR chaplaincy. “I think this applies to any organization where you have that initial exuberance, and you send someone off. Then you sort of lose track of what they’re doing and how they’re doing it. You lose that relationship that should continue to nurture and grow and help someone see the need for that community.” While this happens in any organization, the importance of remaining aware of this tendency in ministry is emphasized in FR chaplaincy, where the minister is more likely to experience high levels of vicarious and direct trauma.

One Board member suggested that we must “consider the chaplains to be missionaries, and their field of mission is the department in which they’re serving.” He also suggested that the church could offer a Board member the opportunity to visit the church and bring awareness to FR chaplaincy. Others on the Board agreed with this desire to improve the direct relationship between TPCC and the sending churches: “I think the expectation (we should have is) that we’re developing relationships with those churches.” The goal of these relationships is not merely financial but about emotional and spiritual support and making sure the chaplains are okay. One Board member asked the pointed question, “Who’s looking out for the chaplains?” Getting care to chaplains in crisis is a goal that TPCC, the sending churches, and the agencies the chaplains serve should bear equally.
The TPCC relationship with churches is also one of accountability and the chaplain’s tether to their church. “If that chaplain was to fall away from there, what that pastor or church leader perceives to be a positive path of spiritual growth, and they stop seeing them in the pews every Sunday,” TPCC would not know without that relationship with the church.

If things aren’t going well in their mind, as far as their participation in the life of the church, we want to know about that because we understand the importance of them being tethered to their church for spiritual growth. Chaplains are out there pouring out into other people’s lives quite a bit. They need to be poured into. While TPCC exists to be a support structure, as far as peer support goes, they also get that from their church.

TPCC has experienced having chaplains who began to spiral downward into dysfunction, only to find out later that they had become disconnected from any church connection. This concern applies to changes in a chaplain’s mobile affiliation with churches, as well. Chaplains sometimes change churches, and the new church may be unaware of their FR ministry. One Board member suggested, “We might choose once a year as our time to go through and (check to see if) our people are connected to a sending church that has changed, to require them to have that name on file with us.” Pastoral changes within a church can also create a gap in understanding and ecclesiastical covering. “That incoming Pastor has come with a different view of qualifications to go into Ministry, or into the mission field, and possibly questioned a chaplain fitting into that mold. In those instances, the role of TPCC has been to come around that chaplain and encourage them to serve at a church that’s going to support them in their calling.” As expressed by the Board, the emphasis is that:

You have to have the support of the spiritual authority in your life as a Christian. If we had a real problem with a chaplain acting out, it would be nice to have the assistance of the spiritual authority in their life to come alongside, even if we had to remove them. Then it would be done in a biblical way that isn’t just ‘us versus them,’ but the spiritual authority in their life (sic).”
Final Board Focus Group

The final focus group began where the first had left off: recognizing the need for intentionality in ensuring better connections between FRCs and their sending churches. “I think as an organization for a long time, we weren’t intentional about making sure they’re connected to their sending church. Some of them have changed churches or are in-between churches, and we should be a little bit more intentional as an organization and say, ‘how can we help you get plugged in if you’re not plugged in?’” A question moved to the forefront: How does the Board connect in a way that helps sending churches to understand what FR chaplaincy is and the ministry activities in which their FRC is engaged? The Board expressed support for their Executive Director, who makes many personal contacts with FR agencies and churches.

The Board further affirmed their position that they are not a licensing or endorsing agency. Instead, as a parachurch organization, they “realize that the sending church is paramount from the spiritual perspective and for spiritual covering and order.” They recognized that the sending church should be the covering for the individual chaplain and the primary organization authorized to “send” them. TPCC should simply recognize the ordination, license, or other forms of endorsement of the church, according to their doctrines and practices. Once approved by their sending church, TPCC may “commission” the FRC after completing all the other vetting required by TPCC and the FR agency the chaplain would serve. A final comment on this point reiterated that extraordinary legal covering exists for chaplains who are formally recognized by their church or denomination, diminishing the legal exposure TPCC would incur if they became the FRC’s licensing source.

The Board spoke to educating the church about their ecclesiastical role, vis a vis the role of TPCC, in their chaplain’s ministry.
I would say when they’re doing the recommendation there should also be a part that says what we (sic) expect from you. You know, if I’m going to write a recommendation, I need to take ownership in also checking in on (them). We write recommendations for all kinds of things at times, and (we) don’t necessarily feel obligated to follow up on that.

The Board expressed that they had the experience of working with churches that were completely unaware of any process for affirming and sending an FRC into ministry. In the section below, representing the work of the Solutions Focus Group, the author will include a tool that TPCC and the group collaboratively developed to educate churches and provide more accountability in the process of accessioning a chaplain into ministry. The group created the tool to help pastors and other sending agents better understand and consider their responsibilities in sending qualified personnel to conduct ministry among first responders.

**Solutions Focus Group**

The Solutions Focus Group initially met with the researcher to discuss ways to remediate the problem sending sources shared in misapprehending their roles, those of COAs, and those of FRCs. The researcher posed the following question to start the discussion, then gave free rein to the group to determine the flow of the conversation: “What initial guidance and information can an agency give to a church or denomination to help them prepare an FRC for ministry before giving them their stamp of approval?”

They immediately identified one problem: a lack of follow-up by one COA in confirming ecclesiastical endorsement of a chaplain candidate’s application. The agency had not always made the requisite calls to references listed in candidate applications to confirm candidate qualifications and recommendations. A second problem the group identified was agency communication with sending sources. Local churches, not denominations, are presently the primary sources of FRC endorsement. The group suggested that agencies must contact the local
church representative directly to discuss endorsement and should require them to complete a questionnaire about the applicant. They also suggested that agencies provide the church information about FR chaplaincy and the separate roles of the church and the COA.

The group discussed the need for universal educational or licensing standards for acceptance to FR ministry. Local requirements are quite broad, with some agencies requiring only a pastor’s approval letter and others requiring proof of ordination and a master’s degree in Divinity or a similar theological degree. While not all churches or denominations have similar requirements for licensing, the group agreed that establishing minimal licensure and education qualifications is ideal. They noted that some chaplains have in the past become untethered from the church body and drifted away from oversight and support and that establishing minimal licensure could mitigate this problem. For example, a COA released two chaplains from service after leaving their sending source churches. They had continued to serve as chaplains while neither the original church nor the COA were aware of their status. This disconnection from a sending source can be a problem for FRCs with no organizational agency but a direct connection from their church to an FR agency. The group agreed that it would be beneficial to establish a system of accountability that ensures that FRCs remain in an ongoing relationship with their sending source. Educational and licensing requirements often demand that churches account for their ministers. A pastoral letter of approval disconnected from any formal ecclesiastical endorsement struck the group as insufficient to ensure continued support and accountability with the church sending source.

One group participant suggested four standards that agencies should require of applicants and confirm with sending sources:

1. They must be a member in good standing that participates in the life of the church.
2. They must demonstrate maturity and professionalism sufficient to represent the church.
3. They must possess adequate ministry and life experience for the FRC mission field.
4. They must meet the church or denomination’s established criteria for conducting spiritual care and counsel.

Other suggestions for qualification included verifying ICPC or FFC certification, ensuring FRCs met basic competence in their church’s theology, and providing some basic vetting of candidates by a board of presently serving chaplains.

The group addressed other suggestions for developing better connections between all parties and improving the professionalization of the FR chaplaincy accession process. These suggestions included:

1. Refine educational material to give to sending sources to help them understand both their role and those of the COA and the police or fire department.
2. Develop a quarterly newsletter that the COA would send to sending sources to update them on what the FRCs were doing.
3. COAs should consider church outreaches, like a pastors’ breakfast or luncheon. These events would create a vehicle for recruiting potential candidates and educating churches on FRC ministries. Pastors suggested such events during the sending source meetings.

As a closing thought, one participant shared, “One mayor said that the only time he could get pastors out to talk to them about doing something for their city was if he bought all of their lunches.” On this note, the group agreed to meet independently to discuss specific tools to improve the parties’ connections. The group initially developed two tools to help implement their suggestions. The Endorsement Questionnaire for Chaplain Candidate and Questionnaire for the Chaplain Candidate’s Sending Source are in Appendix D.4. Additionally, TPCC provided their Ecclesiastical Endorsement letter to applicants, which Director Ben Harris presented to the focus group for discussion and revision. The letter explains FR chaplaincy and endorsement and is in Appendix D.5.
The sending source meetings resulted in eleven Zoom conferences, nine of which included both the sending source representative and their respective FRC. Of the eleven meetings, nine included senior pastors. One meeting included a denominational representative and one an associate pastor in charge of missions. Three of the FRCs are elders with long histories in their churches and strong relationships with their senior pastors. They indicated having ceremonies when they became elders, but not when they became FRCs. Three FRCs are pastors, one of which was retired from the pastorate, each with long histories and close relationships with their senior pastors. They indicated their churches had conducted ceremonies for ordination but received no ceremony when they later took on a role as an FRC. One participant was commissioned in a ceremony as an FRC and had a long relationship (at least twelve years) with his church. Of the seven listed above, six self-identified as being in the category of either low or no burnout, while one showed burnout in a moderate range. Another FRC stated she had a long relationship with her church but was not a credentialed minister and had not had a ceremony to become an FRC. After his participation in the study raised his awareness, her missions pastor stated that the church would work with her to endorse or commission her. One FRC was not a member of the church she regularly attended and had not sought recognition of her ministry by her church. One FRC had only been in his church for a year, mainly during the COVID-19 era of primarily online services but had not sought recognition for his ministry from his new church. The two above FRCs indicated the highest level of burnout among all the participants. The final FRC among the eleven participants in the sending source interviews did not have a church she attended but participated in the online
community that endorsed her with a formal ceremony. She indicated only a small extent of burnout.

**Sending Source Meetings**

The questions posed during the sending source meetings encouraged discussion around several topics that explored their understanding of the theology of FRC ministry and their relationships with both their FRCs and COA. However, few of the sending churches expressed initial forethought about a theology of FRC ministry. Instead, most of them subsumed their understanding of FR chaplaincy under the umbrella category of chaplaincy ministries that included its more conventional forms. The denominational representative, whose position specifically tracked its sect’s ordained and licensed ministers, shared the most cogent, pre-defined theology of ministry, which he offered about ministry outside of the church:

In the theology of Paul, we could bring out that you believe in the whole work of the church. This is one of our affirmations. Or another way to say it is the whole work of the Gospel – that it’s not just about personal life transformation that might be associated with a minister’s work for a church or as an evangelist. But we also know that it’s about community transformation. It’s about what Jesus taught us to pray for his kingdom to be established here on Earth as it is in heaven.\(^{165}\) We know whether it be (ministering to a) first responder, or sitting by a bedside in a hospital, or out on the battlefield in Iraq, it is part of the trajectory of the Gospel. It’s not specifically written down, “This is what we believe is our theology for First Responders.” It is the whole work of the church or the whole work of the Gospel.

Another pastor gave an off-the-cuff response that indicated the same approach to ministry outside of the church walls:

We’re called for radical engagement and to pray for the peace of the city,\(^{166}\) to work for the prosperity and the peace and the good of the broader community in which we are a radical sub-community. We are Christ to the city, and I really love

---

\(^{165}\) Referencing Mt. 6:10.

\(^{166}\) From Jer. 29:7.
(the FRC’s) own thinking about how he is, in some sense, a pastor of our city and does that pastoring through his chaplaincy work.

Most of the pastors recognized the nature of FRC work as a local missions work where the FRCs are not always permitted to present or preach the Gospel outright but rather to be the hands and feet of Christ. They referenced the need to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” One pastor referenced the offices of the church from Ephesians 4:11, noting that, while his church recognizes their chaplain as an elder, he sees his ministry as one containing the office ministries of apostle and evangelist. Others expressed a similar understanding of the FRC’s role as evangelistic in nature, even though they may not overtly preach the Gospel. They also agreed that serving the community in times of crisis among those suffering is a way to express love for God through loving their neighbors. One pastor referenced John 17:15, 18, where Jesus prayed, “I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one…. Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world.” He emphasized the incarnational nature of chaplaincy, just as another pastor expressed:

Jesus deeply understands our pain. We need people that have that experience, training, and understanding to be able to come alongside them. Not only are they first responders in the sense that they hear about it first, but they have that training and that Christlikeness to be able to walk with people in their pain.

There was no unanimity in how to describe the role of the chaplain regarding biblical titles. Pastors variously referred to them as missionaries, pastors, evangelists, apostles, elders, or simply laypersons fulfilling the biblical vision of a priesthood of all believers. Very few indicated that they would require ordination for the role of the FRC, many preferring to defer to

\[167\] Luke 10:27
the requirements of the agencies the FRCs serve. Three of the sending sources indicated that ordination, or at minimum a license, would be required for their organization to endorse the chaplain for ministry. However, only one reduced FRC ministry to a lay ministry that did not need recognition from the church, whether at a local or denominational level. The three sources requiring ordination also required a master’s degree, either as an MDIV or in a general ministry category. One of the three also required four units of Clinical Pastoral Education and an intent to become a board-certified chaplain. Overall, the remainder of the pastors had vague standards that their churches had not codified in their procedures. Many of the pastors stated that they had not thought through the requirements as they had never endorsed an FRC before the one they now endorsed. Many also expressed that their participation in the study had, as one put it, “shone a bright light on something I think is a challenge, which is the general, loose understanding of what FR chaplaincy is all about.” This theme permeated the sending source discussions. Most of the pastors had only minimal exposure to FR ministries, and only one had been an FRC previously, while another had responded to callouts in his capacity as a pastor, and yet another was the head of a COA. The remaining sending sources expressed that they knew little of what FRCs did, although many of them had heard stories of trauma from their own FRCs. One pastor summed it up: “It might be nice to have a little bit more of an understanding of what goes on in training. (My FRC) shared with me a little bit about her experience, but I didn’t have an extensive understanding of what it was she was doing.”

Concerning developing relationships with their FRCs, either those they presently endorsed or future candidates, the same uncertainty prevailed among most participant sending sources. They generally expressed wanting to have the FRCs “check in” now and then, if not to the senior pastor, then to an assigned associate. Some pastors with long-term relationships with
their FRCs had already developed a rhythm of check-ins with their chaplains. However, even those relationships were mainly ad hoc and not something they could readily duplicate with future chaplains. These pastors indicated that they would probably have their FRC train new chaplains. They also recognized that, once the current FRC left the church, future chaplains would arise, and the church would have no remaining institutional knowledge of how to train or support the new chaplain. Complicating this need for developing the chaplain relationship is a pastoral misperception of chaplaincy ministry. The denominational representative interviewed described it:

The way it works in the (denomination) is that we put a lot of focus on our pastors that are in the local church, and there is definitely a local church bias. So, I am constantly being checked on and catch myself in this because I’m doing something broader in communication, and I’m talking to our ministers, and it’s so church-focused. I make that mistake all the time, and several of our chaplains have checked me on this and have continued to remind me that there’s more of us out here and we’re doing important work or can probably see more action in a day than our local church pastors.

A military chaplain in his denomination humorously reminded him that, as a Navy chaplain, he had the largest church in the district, caring for over 5,000 congregants. Even other chaplains, such as those in the military, VA, and hospital settings, tend to misapprehend FR chaplaincy, as one sending source stated: “They don’t really understand that First Responders have a strong chaplaincy narrative. They need to be supported also, just like military chaplains.”

Thus, in explaining what they believed a relationship with an FRC should look like, many pastors spoke in generalities. They recognized that there should be a staff representative put in charge of chaplains as part of their portfolio. They agreed that this representative should meet with the chaplain occasionally to chat, whether just to show support or to lend an ear to hear what the chaplain was going through. One pastor offered, “I think it would be good for them to
be connected to a pastor to be able to work through the dynamics of what they’re experiencing – to ask them how the chaplaincy is doing with their heart and soul.” However, many pastors remained administratively focused, stating that they would want regular reports from their FRCs. Behind that was a desire to see that they were active and accountable in ministry and to understand what kind of obstacles or struggles they were facing. One pastor captured the overall confusion regarding how the relationship should work:

I was in conversation with one chaplain serving at a hospital, and she didn’t want to be engaged in a local congregation outside of her own work because she was already sort of at her exhaustion level within her work. The FRC’s experience was different because she was on call, so it wasn’t regular, and it was unpredictable when she was going to be called in. I was trying to make the attempt to just be available to her when she needed it, but I think the biggest problem is that there is no formal relationship between the church and the chaplaincy. Those relationships are forged on an individual basis. That, I think, was a struggle for me, and not just with the FRC but with the other chaplain as well. I don’t know what I’d like to see, but I certainly know within our denomination, we have some barriers along the lines of no clear expectations – some chaplains wanting church support and some chaplains not actually wanting church support. It feels like a lot of the experience is vastly different depending on which chaplain you’re talking to. Because of that, it seems like it’s hard to come up with any sort of universal plan.

The sending sources also recognized that the chaplain needs to have relationships with other chaplains who can understand what they are going through. Most pastors emphatically noted that the FRCs needed to maintain a vital connection with the life of their home church. While not everyone in the congregation knows what they are going through, the pastors believed the presence of the body was essential to ground them in some sense of normalcy, to offer prayer and other support, and to keep them connected with the source of faith that launched them into their ministry. The pastors emphasized the benefit of the FRC to the church body, as well. Many pastors either had given, or indicated they would in the future give, the pulpit to their FRC to share with the church what had been going on in their community, places where they could offer tangible assistance, and the burdens they were carrying. Several pastors used their FRC to teach
church members about trauma and crisis response. A few indicated that the FRC had been invaluable when the congregation had faced internal issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, addiction, or crime-related trauma, the response to which was more than the pastors had the expertise to manage.

One of the sending sources is a COA that ordains and sends chaplains into the field. Two participating chaplains also served as directors of such agencies. Four FRCs belonged to COAs. Another four were part of chaplaincy groups designed for fellowship but not designed to provide the administrative structure COAs offer. The sending source pastors unanimously agreed that these middlemen were advantageous in helping with the relationships between churches and the agencies their FRCs served. One pastor stated that these agencies provided training that the church could not. Another stated, “I can’t help them nearly as much with grief counseling, with their own processing of trauma, doing the takedown of a suicide scene, or something like that. That’s stuff that I’m going to need help with.” Pastors also need help raising the right questions about supporting a chaplain: “One of the questions is that if the chaplain is always there to help other people who are going through trauma, who helps the chaplain?” A pastor added one problem they faced that a COA could support:

Everything fell on (my FRC) to tell me what she needed, and everything fell on me to reach out to her to see if she was getting what she needed. That doesn’t always work, you know, unless you have the perfect combination of a person who really knows what they need and are able to articulate (sic). My guess is that she might not have even been aware of her needs. And I certainly was not aware of them because I was relying upon her to share those, and that is a difficult system to be able to sustain.

Pastors were concerned with fellowship opportunities for their FRCs, as well. “I would love the idea that there’s some organization out there that can give our FRC a place where they can
download what are going to be unique experiences, the unique trauma that they are experiencing and walking people through.”

The most significant need of the pastors seemed to be communication, particularly in getting information about what FRCs do. “Having an informational packet would be great so that if we are presenting it as an option for people or for someone who’s got a passionate interest, it would be great so that we can say, ‘Here it is. This is the portfolio of what you’re considering. Here’s how we would support you. Here’s what they (the COA) would do for you.’” However, as one pastor advised,

I would probably want from you a monthly or quarterly email. What I don’t need is the every-week email you send just to stay on my radar. It has to be worth my time and tell me specific things about what you’ve done, how I can support, what I can pray for, what you’d like to do. It’s not like Instagram, where if I don’t post every other day, people are gonna forget me. I think it’s better to do some of those things face to face to build a relationship.

Five of the sending sources noted that they wanted a quarterly or annually scheduled gathering where the COA could provide information. For example, one pastor shared about the “pastor’s day” that a local military installation provides to tell local pastors about military chaplaincy:

The two times I’ve gone, it’s been a great experience. They have a luncheon and explain what’s going on. They also take the time to expose you to what the military personnel are going through. I would suggest something like that. Not just a luncheon but have some firefighters there and give a little demonstration or some police officers that would take the pastors through some sort of aspect of their training. I think that would be useful right now because of the situation we’re in (in our culture, presently).

Luncheons were not the only food-based meeting suggestion, as some added breakfasts. They wanted them to be informational and to include “not only the chaplains themselves but the personnel that the chaplains minister to – a chance where people relating to the chaplain, supporting them, can come in and get some faces, names, and connections.” One pastor suggested a “reaffirmation service” that included the FRCs, their First Responders, and
representatives of the COA. Another pastor supported these ideas, noting that they could use the information to build support for the chaplaincy and even recruit chaplains within their church: “And if that’s you here, here’s (a chaplaincy representative) who is going to talk about kind of what that looks like, and we’re going to talk about what that means to send you and affirm you on that.” Another pastor suggested having a panel discussion at these meetings, “where local pastors and those who are training FRCs could be in the panel discussion around the question, ‘What does this relationship look like?’”

One complaint was that all the information a pastor received came strictly from her FRC. If that FRC did not provide it, she “didn’t have a way of communicating with the larger organization” or establishing a more formal relationship. One of the chaplains, a director of a COA, offered a fitting summary of the benefits of these agencies in being the intermediaries between church and FR agencies:

It’s the same idea with any other missionary in the sense that if a missionary came to us cold turkey and said, “Hey, I want to go to Russia, send me.” we wouldn’t do it. We would say you need to go through the pathways of getting trained to be a missionary – knowing what you’re getting into and even having a support agency on the ground there, right? (Our chaplaincy agency) is just the (local) FR support agency for our missionary, in that regard. We would love to support you, pray for you, commission you, all that kind of stuff. But we’re not experts on Russia missions. We’re experts on sending you and loving you and praying for you.

One pastor described it as a way to “organize pathways of communication.” While pastors were often more concerned about their FRC’s link to the church, its mission, and its theology, they understood that they were not prepared to be the direct links to FR agencies and needed a middle link to provide the training that neither the police and fire departments nor the church could provide. They also recognized the need for someone who could “create some sort of emotional
support network so that our chaplain feels like they’ve got someone uniquely that they can go to that is very similar to what (pastors might have) at church.”

Of the sending sources that participated in these meetings, only one had conducted a ceremony directed toward the minister’s accession into FR chaplaincy: “We do provide a ceremony where we formally ordain the person, and we do it through the laying on of hands, blessing of the stole, and also anointing with oil.” This participant represented a COA from the high church tradition, primarily Catholic. The agency works separately from any institutional churches and sends and supports many chaplains, most of whom are not in first responder ministry. A pastor in the group stated that he included a commissioning service for his FRC within a Sunday worship service, where the elders prayed over the chaplain and laid hands on him. One high church pastor said, “We have ceremonies and rituals that are associated with people who take up leadership positions within the church: elder, deacon, pastor. Those are really the only forms of leadership that receive a specific kind of liturgy.”

Several participants indicated that, since their FRC was already a pastor or an elder in the church, they did not hold any unique service or affirmation apart from the one they initially received when they were appointed or ordained. One pastor noted that this would present a problem for future chaplain candidates who were not already formally recognized in ministry:

I think, in the future what we would do? I mean, we recognize (his position), but since he was already on staff, it kind of just became something that he did that was added on. So he’s already a recognized pastor. If you were to have somebody that just came only in the role of chaplaincy, I do see that that would merit the recognition and (deserve a) distinctive and affirming ceremony, by which the church is really called to support, to pray, and to come alongside that person and understand what they do.

Another pastor shared that they announce missionaries in their care to the congregation to direct support to those ministries. He indicated that he would do that for an FRC but stopped short of
saying that he would hold a special affirmation ceremony. Some had never sent an FRC before the current one but said they would probably at least pray over them during a worship service, as they do that often for other ministries. A denominational director over licensing stated that they have ceremonies for credentialing but did not have any formal ceremonies for FRCs. He stated that the FRC’s church would initiate such events. “But if a church or chaplain were to say, hey, can we do a commissioning service, I would say absolutely! Let’s do it.” Most of the responses seemed to offer agreement that some form of affirmation in front of the congregation was a good idea. However, the energy for more formal ceremonies seemed to center around pastoral ordination and other forms of general ministerial licensing. Until COAs or FR agencies begin requiring a higher level of church credentialing from FRCs, most sending source representatives may remain content with less formal, local church-based ceremonies that may not gain a place in church standard operating procedures.

**Final Surveys**

Only seven of the eleven sending sources returned final surveys. The answers to the survey questions were often brief and positive regarding their participation in the study. A few responses provided insight into answers to the study’s problem statement. As to how their connection had improved, one pastor offered,

To be honest, I hadn’t done a whole lot of thinking or reflection about the partnership we had with our FRC prior to the participation in this study. If it weren’t for my close working relationship with our FRC, I don’t know that I would have really know what was being asked of him in his role as a chaplain. I wonder how many of our church leaders have the same experience. I am thankful for the connection that I enjoy with our FRC and his openness in sharing what he can about what he’s experiencing. We’ve had good conversations about ministry, burnout, boundaries, and more. My hope is that I can be more intentional in this moving forward.
A pastor noted that their participation had improved their organization’s ministry efforts because “it came at an important time in which we were setting a course for the future of our ministry, and it placed the need to be more consciously responsive to all our first responders on the front page.” Another stated that they had made plans to strengthen their relationship with their FRC’s COA and make that relationship visible within the congregation and the local community.

Some of the pastors already had a good idea of what their FRCs do, as noted, but others indicated that their participation helped them better understand how they could support their FRC, how the trauma the FRCs see regularly is a drain on their personal resources, how chaplain services are organized, and what FRCs do to help the FRs. While one pastor noted he had not shifted in his understanding of how to affirm his FRCs, he was “emboldened to see the chaplain as a pastor/missionary to our culture and first responders.” Another pastor stated:

It was clear that this was a ministry, not only to the community but to our first responders as well. We held a commissioning service for him to this ministry. The elders and deacons laid hands on him and prayed over him as part of this service. Not only is it important for there to be a conferral of spiritual authority and a well-developed theological understanding of the pastoral and missional role of chaplains, it is also important for both the chaplain and the congregation to readily identify that this has taken place. Through participation in this process, we are working on ways that we might continually reinforce this understanding in the future.

To better support their FRC in the future, one pastor offered that they were working to raise awareness of this ministry within their congregation. Another pastor was working on concrete measures to raise visibility by putting the FRC information in their missions reports internally and sharing updates with their congregation in their bulletin to build support, encouragement, and prayer for the mission of their FRC.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the researcher will summarize the study results and assess those results’ effectiveness in fulfilling the study’s goals. This chapter includes analyses of the hypotheses the researcher presented, comparisons of the study’s results with research in current literature, an assessment of unanticipated outcomes of the study, and suggestions for further investigation that researchers may pursue. Admittedly, this study unearthed more information than the author will unveil below. This chapter’s analysis will remain focused upon those conclusions that address the original thesis of this study: Chaplains who are properly affirmed, supported, and sent to the FR mission field by their sending sources are less likely to experience isolation and therefore should experience lower rates of burnout.

The problem statement of this project focused upon the lack of support structures that lead some FRCs to experience frustration, isolation, and ultimately burnout in their ministries. The study’s goal has been to find solutions to the problematic support gap between FRCs and their sending sources. The author has posited that assessing and remediating the adequacy of those sending source support structures should result in an increase in FRC satisfaction in ministry and a corresponding decrease in emotional exhaustion in ministry. The study produced mixed results. By and large, however, the hypotheses held up, for the most part, and the social support structure the study targeted, the sending source, proved to be a key determiner of the FRC’s sense of personal accomplishment (PA) and essential guard against emotional exhaustion (EE).
**Hypothesis 1**

The first iteration of the FBI/Questionnaire and the FRC interviews test Hypothesis 1:

A higher rate of burnout may be expected among those FRCs with a limited or shallow connection with their sending sources, as well as for those with no sending source.

This section will provide concluding thoughts on the FBI/Questionnaire and FRC interviews and their correlation with the hypothesis above. It will also examine other factors relating to FRC burnout derived from the data that the hypotheses did not address. The FBI and its attached Questionnaire helped establish the baseline burnout indicators of the twenty-seven FRC participants, and the FRC interviews added thoughtful commentary to explain FRC perspectives that the numbers from the FBI may not fully display. The author elected to present the FBI results from both iterations in this section for reference.

**FBI, Questionnaire, and Interviews**

The study utilized the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) in Phases 1 and 3 of this three-phased research project to assess changes in FRC PA and EE over three to four months as the intervention advanced. The FBI offers a quantitative view of the situation that the researcher reviewed in Chapter 4. Both iterations of the FBI showed good reliability for the eleven questions in the Survey of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) and strong reliability for the eleven questions in the Satisfaction in Ministry Survey (SIMS). The researcher conducted FRC interviews, sending source meetings, focus groups, surveys, and questionnaires to provide a qualitative narrative that would deepen the results of the quantitative analysis. The FBI results read in isolation tended to oppose the balanced affect theory Francis proffers in his extensive
research on clergy burnout, suggesting a strong inverse correlation between EE and PA. In other words, as PA scores increase, EE scores tend to decrease. However, responses to questions related to PA between the two iterations of the FBI exhibited a ceiling effect, meaning the FRCs reported high FBI PA scores that left little room for increase. (In the first FBI, 24 participants scored their PA at nine (out of eleven) or higher. In the final FBI, the same 24 scored their PA at ten or higher.) Additionally, the qualitative interviews revealed that some participants identified non-FRC ministry-related life stressors as more significant contributors to their sense of exhaustion than their chaplaincy ministries. Thus, the personal accounts of the FRCs in qualitative interviews did not always accurately reflect the degree to which they expressed frustration in their ministries in the quantitative tool.

While the comparison between first and second iteration FBI scores is longitudinal and thus does not impact the suggested inverse correlation between EE and PA found in singular iterations, these results suggest that FRC participants frequently were unable to answer FBI questions solely with their chaplain ministry in mind. This factor may explain the variance from Francis’ conclusion and highlights one of the difficulties confronting FRCs, as opposed to ministers in pastoral and institutional chaplaincy ministries. The latter group typically confines their ministry activities to a standard, full-time workweek. By contrast, less than half of the FRCs (twelve of twenty-seven) in this study work full-time in chaplaincy. Additionally, all FRCs work at least on a callout basis, meaning they respond to calls on a 24-hour basis. Four of the twelve full-time FRCs finance their ministry with retirement income, three draw incomes from their positions as pastoral staff, two solicit all their support from donors, one is a paid fire department employee, and three are directors of chaplaincy organizational agencies (COAs). Fourteen

---

participants work full-time or part-time jobs to support their chaplaincy endeavors. Seven of these fourteen showed up among the top ten FRCs exhibiting burnout. One of three from among the full-time chaplaincy category that appeared in the top ten burnout range earned a church salary and performed pastoral duties in addition to their FRC ministry. The other two had seven and twenty-two years in FR chaplaincy, each relying upon retirement to fund their ministry. These two answered that they were experiencing burnout “to a small extent” due to life circumstances outside of chaplaincy but demonstrated in their FBI responses other burnout indicators. For example, they related their age (both were over seventy years of age) and time in the FR world (one as a former first responder, the other as a long-time FRC) as possible factors impacting their perception of burnout. However, in the Baseline FBI responses, age did not correlate with PA, while it did bear a negative correlation with EE.

The data provided by the initial FRC Questionnaire and the FRC interviews appears to confirm Hypothesis 1. Seven of the ten FRCs indicating some level of burnout stated that they had no sending source or provided sending sources with which they had distant or sporadic relationships. Of the remaining seventeen FRCs that indicated they were not experiencing burnout at all, only two stated they had no sending source. One of those admitted during the interview that the church he pastors is his sending source. Thus, while having a sending source does not guarantee that one will not encounter burnout, the evidence suggests that those chaplains sharing good to strong relationships with an identifiable sending source within a church or denomination exhibit lower burnout in their ministries. This conclusion points to the need for FRCs to establish vital relationships with their church or denomination, if not before entering FR chaplaincy, then soon thereafter. Additionally, eleven of the seventeen FRCs responding that they were experiencing no burnout at all received either ordination or other
formal ceremonies at the initiation of their ministry endeavors. In contrast, only four of the ten that indicated some level of burnout received an initial ceremony, further suggesting that the earlier that FRCs establish an affirming connection to a sending source, the better they seem to fare in relation to ministry burnout.

**Hypothesis 2**

Sending sources that are more engaged with their FRCs might be expected to have a process in place for a spiritual commissioning of their ministers and a well-developed theological understanding of chaplaincy ministry.

The sending source conferences revealed interesting results relating to Hypothesis 2. Only seven of the twenty-seven FRC participants stated that they had received some form of formal ceremony upon entering chaplaincy. Others who stated they had a ceremony referenced their church ordinations as the source of that ceremony. None of the FRCs could articulate a codified theological support statement for FR chaplaincy. Many were able to link their ministry to scriptural mandates such as the Great Commission, Jesus’ statement in John 17 that He had sent the disciples just as He was sent, or other verses that expressed the Christian call to evangelism or loving their neighbors. While it may seem redundant to establish a theology of FR chaplaincy, given existing theologies of ministry and generic chaplaincy, Crick’s offering of a theology of chaplaincy ministry reminds us that a critical difference between pastors and chaplains is that chaplains “are evangelists reaching people and systems of all kinds beyond the proverbial temple gates.”

John the Baptist demonstrates the need to address the ethics of soldiers when he addresses a group of them, telling them to eschew extortion and harassment and

---

be content with their wages.\textsuperscript{170} The growing professional nature of FR chaplaincy will eventually demand a cogent exposition of the biblical undergirding that supports and affirms the call to this ministry.

One of the hard conclusions of this study is that most pastors and denominational leaders focus myopically upon pulpit ministry, almost to the exclusion of other forms of ministry that might benefit from ordination or licensing. While most of the eleven pastors who engaged in sending source interviews spoke glowingly of their need to increase support for their FRCs and could elucidate biblical reasons for community outreach, none had developed a theology beyond what they had studied for pastoral ministry. Three did not respond to emails requesting a response on the final survey of sending sources. It is a dire point that only eleven of eighteen identifiable sending sources took the time to support their FRCs in these interviews, and only seven of those completed the final survey. One FRC captured her faith in her pastor (who refused to return emails from either me or the FRC) in stark terms: “Since the first FBI, I have thought about my lead pastor as a sending source. He is silent to all I do or wish to do. It frustrates me because I don’t trust he would empathize or change his time for me.”\textsuperscript{171}

The pastors and denominational leaders interviewed were very thoughtful about ministry outside of the church and very supportive of their FRCs. However, one summed up the inside-the-walls perspective of most ministers well, saying, “The way it works in the (denomination) is that we put a lot of focus on our pastors that are in the local church, and there is definitely a local church bias.” He and the other sending source representatives expressed the need to focus outside of the church, but the church as an institution appears stuck within the walls of the

\textsuperscript{170} Lk. 3:14

\textsuperscript{171} This sorrowful lament echoes what Galek, et al. note in “Burnout,” 638: The amount of support supervisors offer in the workplace has a definite impact on burnout.
church. As a denominational leader, he articulated a “whole work of the Gospel” approach to all ministry, noting that FR chaplaincy fits into that overarching theology. While this denominational leader was not in a direct relationship with the FRC, the FRC shared a good relationship with his church pastor – though not as good as his previous pastor. Many FRCs stated they experienced decreases in relational connection when new pastors took over the church that supported them, which came with a deemphasis of the FRC ministry. In each of those cases, the church did not have a codified theology or a formally established description of FRC ministry in the church records that would inform future pastors of the importance they placed upon chaplaincy as a church. A church’s support of an FRC relied solely upon the influence the FRC wielded within the church. This, in turn, relied solely upon his or her relationship with the pastor. When a new pastor took the reins, no institutional memory existed for these churches to maintain the FRC’s status, and future chaplain candidates could point to no established practice or protocol to guide their training, support, or relationship with the church.

Long-established relationships between an FRC and his or her pastor were the most successful at ensuring support, training, accountability, and a feeling of security in the mind of the FRC. These relationships typically occurred in small churches\textsuperscript{172} where the pastor oversaw fewer and smaller ministries. FRCs in larger churches were the most likely to suffer from changes in the pulpit. This phenomenon seemed to stem from a pastor’s lack of awareness of FRC chaplaincy as a ministry of his church or a change in theology from one pastor to the next. In the former case, the apparent problem was a lack of any vehicle for passing along institutional knowledge. In the latter case, which was true in one FRC-pastor relationship, the new pastor held a lower view of women in ministry than his predecessor. Not every church can provide a direct

\textsuperscript{172} The researcher did not report church size in the data but derived it from FRC interviews.
relationship between a senior pastor and a chaplain. However, every FRC should have two goals as they develop connections with their sending sources:

1) They should seek to build a relationship with a pastor or elder in their church that will be their voice at leadership meetings and provide them a source of encouragement, accountability, training, and support.

2) They should help that pastor or elder establish a standard operating procedure within the church regarding FR chaplaincy that will define their role and relationship within the church’s ministry portfolio and provide future chaplains and pastors some institutional memory and guidance for FR chaplaincy as an established church ministry.

It will depend upon the church’s theology of ministry, but an additional consideration for an FRC is to respond to God’s call by obeying their sending source’s requirements for the attainment of ministerial credentials to qualify themselves in the sight of God and the church. This follows Paul’s advice to Timothy to “be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” If an FRC wishes to improve the status of chaplaincy in the eyes of those whose sight is narrowly focused upon ministries within the church, they should become conversant in their church’s theology and practices. If they are to improve the professionalism of their ministry, they should become knowledgeable in the theology that makes them more effective in their ministry. FRCs in close relationships with their pastors and who participated in sending source interviews unanimously reported that they had made progress in solidifying a better relationship and were more likely to report advances in codifying their role in the church’s procedures and practices. Based upon the responses of FRCs, the researcher does not believe that larger churches will act on their own to establish a deeper relationship or advance chaplaincy ministry without a concerted effort by the FRC to follow the above advice. In the same way that missionaries petition for time to address
their ministry before the congregation, prepare for their missions with extensive studies, and request material support from congregants and churches, FRCs should prepare to do the same.

While the qualitative interviews with FRCs and meetings with sending sources did not support Hypothesis 2, the researcher recognizes that denominations typically work from well-developed theologies of ministry, each of which varies in its requirements for affirmations of a ministry calling. When an FRC becomes familiar with their tradition’s theology of pastoral ministry, it should not be a great challenge to craft an extension of that theology into the FR chaplaincy field. When FR chaplaincy as a profession articulates its place in the formal ministry realm, and when FR chaplains take studying to show themselves approved seriously, it should by extension be easier to gain formal recognition and affirmation from their church.

These suggestions should increase the FRC’s ability to convince the local church body to properly send new FRCs into the field with a ceremony that includes elements such as prayer, the laying on of hands, and promises of ongoing support. Most chaplains in the study agreed with the importance of being adequately sent by and connected to a local church body – or at least a denomination. Those who had ceremonies for their ordinations did not suffer from not having one when they became FRCs, as they saw FR chaplaincy as an extension of their ministry ordination. However, several did receive a special prayer ceremony that they stated was a blessing that they appreciated. Those that had never received a ceremony expressed that they did not know what they were missing and that they would have appreciated such a ceremony. As expressed in the theological foundations section above, such ceremonies are a well-established tradition with scriptural backing that confers genuine power and authority to minister the Gospel wherever the church may send a minister.
Eleven of the seventeen participants that stated they were not experiencing burnout in their ministries said they had received formal ceremonies, either in their ordination or for the FRC commissioning. Four of the ten participants that expressed that they were experiencing burnout received ceremonies. Based upon the study's qualitative responses, there is reasonable cause to recommend that FRCs seek some form of ceremony to commission them into ministry. Hypothesis 2 gains some support in that the closest relationships tended to lead to discussions between potential FRCs and their leadership, which then led to a confirmation of their calling and a ceremony that consisted of at least prayer. However, these ceremonies were organic and spontaneous rather than codified and well planned. From the responses in the study, it appears that most pastors, especially those in larger churches, spend more time and theological thought on baby dedications or baptisms than they do on FRC commissioning ceremonies. Once again, it is incumbent upon FRCs to engage their church or denominational leadership on the theology and import of methods for sending them properly into ministry to first responders.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3: Collaborative meetings will net organic solutions that meet both the commissioning and social support needs of the sending organization and chaplain, creating a perception of reduced EE/DP and increased PA.

Phase 2 of this study tested Hypothesis 3. This hypothesis seemed to gain support in the study wherever sending sources were willing to meet and create collaboration. While the researcher could have imposed solutions on the study participants, the ideal outcome was the production of organic solutions by the participants. This outcome found fruition in two primary ways. First, the Solutions Focus Group met and created better tools for vetting chaplains. Second, at least eleven chaplains held largely positive meetings with their sending source.
representatives and increased their visibility within their church, some gaining tangible relational growth where previously they had experienced no connection.

The Solutions Focus Group created a start to two excellent tools for helping churches and chaplain candidates dig deeper into the process of FRC candidacy. The two tools are questionnaires that ask both church and chaplain candidates questions exploring their relationship and the chaplain’s qualifications. Pointed questions about the relationship between the church and chaplain help receiving agencies (COAs or FR agencies) discern the chaplain's depth of connection with their church, which is a good indicator of the ongoing support they will receive from their spiritual source. The tools also ask about the candidate’s previous experiences with burnout, anxiety, and depression in their ministry and how they dealt with it. This may seem an invasive question to ask anyone who has filled out a typical job application. However, applications for law enforcement chaplaincy can be deeply invasive. Anyone who has taken a polygraph test knows just how intrusive they can be, as well. In addition, the standards for entering FR chaplaincy are high, just as becoming a police officer or firefighter demand high standards. Thus, any chaplain candidates balking at difficult questions on such an application may raise red flags for agencies seeking to employ them.

The Solution Focus Group also expressed support for an idea that came from the sending source meetings. As noted in the results section, many pastors showed energy surrounding the suggestion that COAs develop breakfast or luncheon meetings to educate pastors on FR chaplaincy. Ultimately, it would be optimal to gather pastors, COA representatives, and FRCs to create new, organic solutions. These luncheons may be the type of events that could generate such a gathering. It is good to see pastors suggesting relational connections that draw upon the FR community and their COAs to expose the pastoral community to the mission of and need for
chaplains in this specialty field. With tongue firmly in cheek, one might suggest that even Jesus’ ministry began and ended with feasts – namely a wedding feast and a seder meal – so it is no surprise that pastors might wish to include a meal in this process. Unfortunately, the researcher did not include a meal incentive for pastors to join their FRCs in the study meetings, so perhaps future researchers may consider this possible error in research tactics.

Did the FRCs involved in the various collaborative meetings experience a boost in their PA and a corresponding decrease in EE/DP? The results are mixed. The FRCs in the Solutions Focus Group did not show significant changes in either affect category. However, each of them exhibited high PA and no EE/DP in their ministries from the start of the study. Among the ten FRCs indicating they were experiencing burnout, regardless of the level, five were among the eleven whose sending sources agreed to meetings. Of the five, four experienced increases in PA and decreases in EE/DP. The remaining FRC either left or paused participation in FR ministry by the end of the study. That FRC did not participate in the conference with the sending source.

Interestingly, among the remaining six FRCs that participated in sending source meetings, five stated that they experienced stronger relationships with their sending sources, even though they already had good relationships. One FRC expressed delight at the improved connection she built through the process, and one stated that his meeting had demonstrated the support he had hoped for but had seen follow-through after the fact. Finally, one FRC whose sending source did not respond to a meeting request showed decreased PA and increased EE/DP. However, while the overall effect of the meetings was to improve relations between sending sources and FRCs, some whose sending sources did not respond to requests for meetings expressed disappointment in their connections.
Several observations from these results lead the researcher to make the following recommendations. First, FRCs seem to benefit from the intermediary presence of COAs in their ministries. COAs can fill the role the researcher held in this study. They can facilitate better communication between FRCs and their churches, which the study has shown nets positive results in reducing EE/DP and improving PA. However, much of this is dependent upon sending source participation. Future researchers must explore possibilities in how to improve church participation in these relationships. Pastors and denominational leaders must become more involved in FRC ministries, not only in the validation process but in the ongoing support required to maintain the vital connection FRCs need from their sending sources.

Second, FRCs and COAs must engage these problem relationships and find solutions in collaboration with local churches. There appears to be a significant correlation between a church’s support and their FRC’s experience of burnout symptoms. Church pastors overall showed a limited capacity for participating in the life of their FRC ministers. It is incumbent upon FRCs and COAs to seek a place in the sending source’s schedule to create a viable relationship that creates the support structure that FRCs need in their ministries. Even the most engaged pastors in the study expressed a lack of understanding of their FRCs’ challenges and how they could formalize their church’s support for them. However, when FRCs and sending sources did engage, those supports and the sending source’s understanding tended to improve. COAs must support FRC needs to address sending source complacency.

Finally, the focus group discussions developed helpful tools, and pastors offered excellent solutions that created opportunities to strengthen initial relationships between FRCs and sending sources. These suggestions placed a burden upon COAs to educate local pastors and ensure their vetting processes left no ambiguity in the church’s role in qualifying and supporting
their FRCs. COAs should engage the local spiritual community with conferences that engage pastors and denominational leaders with FRC ministry and include input from FR agencies and FRC testimonials. One FRC and COA leader stated that story is an essential element to building support. The researcher agrees that this is perhaps the best method of reaching disinterested pastors. While food is a significant draw in the religious community, the stories of FRCs and first responders are the hooks needed to reel in support and cement long-term relationships.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4: Scores on the second FBI will indicate a decrease in EE/DP and an increase in PA, evidencing some alleviation of burnout.¹⁷³

The results section noted the apparent confirmation of Hypothesis 4. The researcher reviewed the results and divided them into four categories. First, fourteen participants indicated at least minimal positive change from their first FBI to the second. Second, four of the lowest five scores indicated significant decreases in EE/DP and increases in PA. Only one participant showed substantial decline in his PA and increase in his EE/DP. His responses in the final FRC survey were cursory, at best, leaving the researcher with little upon which to base the increase in burnout. However, he had expressed frustration with the transactional nature of FRC ministry with community members and his limited access to the first responders in his agency. His answers were indicative of the sense of a loss of purpose in his ministry that Foss found in his study of clergy burnout.¹⁷⁴ Further, while a tenured FRC, he indicated that he had no sending source and had not been affirmed in his ministry except by a simple letter of recommendation.

¹⁷³ Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors Predicting Burnout,” 84, 95.

¹⁷⁴ Foss, “Burnout Among Clergy,” 16.
Sadly, he stated that he intended to transition out of FR chaplaincy to a different ministry. The departure of two of this study’s FRCs from chaplaincy, both suffering high levels of burnout in their ministries, is a clarion call to future researchers to consider how they may further the study of burnout mitigation.

Two other categories consisted of no changes and minor declines in FBI scores. Eight participants showed no change in their scores, while four showed insignificant levels of decline. The researcher considered insignificant those decreases that included less than a four-point swing in scores between the two affects. The four in minor decline each indicated fewer than two points of increase in EE/DP, while each had final scores of ten or eleven in PA (on the eleven-point scale), meeting ceiling effect criteria. These four participants gave no clues in their interviews that might explain the minor negative change in their FBI scores, leading the researcher to believe that their second FBI results may have suffered from their perception of the questions or transient changes in their life or ministry circumstances.

COAs and future researchers should consider the value of inventories like the FBI in educating FRCs on the issue of burnout. One participant that scored in the higher burnout category said of the FBI, “It’s interesting to hear that I met criteria for burnout because I maintain good self-awareness and don’t meet criteria for depression or anxiety.” Even those who believe they are self-aware often lack the ability to see objectively from outside of their own situation. Another participant who has experienced burnout in the past stated that “at the time I burned out, I was the last to recognize what was happening. I was in denial.” He further noted that the FBI caused him to pause and consider where he honestly stood, spiritually and emotionally, and whether he was adequately taking care of himself. Many others stated that the FBI raised their awareness and caused them to review their current priorities and commitments.
Another suggestion that TPCC will be implementing was that COAs must train their FRCs on chaplain self-care, or for FRCs to ensure they seek out such courses. COAs, FR agencies, sending sources, and fellow FRCs must also be prepared to recognize the signs of burnout in chaplains. The TPCC Board and some pastors posed the question, “Who is taking care of the chaplains?” It bears repeating that each stakeholder has a responsibility to ensure that chaplains receive care so they may continue to be effective caregivers, especially given the higher rate of mental health issues that chaplains face compared to their parish clergy counterparts.  

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5: Chaplains and sending sources will report better connections and more substantial provision of ongoing support for FRC ministry upon implementing the intervention design.

Hypothesis 5 relied upon participation by both sending sources and FRCs for validation. As previously noted, only eleven of twenty-two possible sending sources participated in meetings with their FRCs and the researcher. Five FRCs indicated they had no sending source, and two FRCs were unavailable for the meetings. Of the eleven sending sources that engaged in the meetings, only seven completed final surveys. Perhaps the weakest part of this study was its reliance upon representatives from sending sources to engage on behalf of their FRCs. Future researchers seeking to study these connections would do well to recruit churches, denominations, and chaplain endorsers with greater fervor. Given the low participation of sending sources, the researcher recognizes a lower fidelity of some of the study’s conclusions. Some chaplains expressed deep frustration that neither the researcher’s recruitment efforts nor their reinforcing emails or phone calls received a response. One chaplain expressed that she was reluctant to give

---

175 Hotchkiss and Lesher, “Factors,” 89.
her sending source’s contact information because she understood that they were too busy to respond. As a pastor with twenty-five years of experience, the researcher understands how busy the pastor’s schedule can be. However, he gladly responds to all requests of his church’s ministries for communication. The researcher does not wish to impugn the pastorate simply for refusing participation in his study; however, it strains credulity that eleven pastors or denominational leaders lacked sufficient time to offer an email response to their FRCs. This response reinforces the earlier assertion that ministry outside the church, where the church is uncomfortable going, is missio non grata, and its ministers thus conduct something less than true ministry.176 The pastors who did engage in this study expressed unanimous appreciation for their FRCs' work and promised greater support for their ministries in the future. Several FRCs indicated in their final surveys that their pastors had taken concrete steps to establish visibility for their FRC ministry as a local missions effort of the church. Thus, in every case, an engaged pastor was also a supportive pastor who actively gave a voice to the chaplain’s ministry before the congregation.

This lack of responsiveness speaks to the low relational connection of FRCs to their sending sources. Some FRCs expressed that they knew the source of inattention to their ministries afforded by their pastors, while others were mystified at the lack of response. Several FRCs indicated that they had developed thick skin to the cold shoulder their pastors showed their ministries. They stated that they did not look to their church for affirmation, or they simply found their support from within the FRC community. Two expressed that they had never sought connection with their local church for their ministry. Based on research by Trihub et al. and

176 Crick, Outside the Gates, 70-71.
Adams et al., the researcher believes that this disconnect is not advisable. Missionaries invariably find covering within their home church from pastors specifically assigned to missions support. Without the same type of connection, FRCs lack the foundational support structure that empowers and enhances their ministries. While many make do without it, sufficient evidence exists in the literature related to clergy burnout, and significant biblical merit is present to suggest that no chaplain should venture into the field without the support of the church.

For those future candidates seeking to enter FR chaplaincy, the researcher strongly suggests making a two-point assessment: 1) Are they called to the church or denomination in which they presently find themselves? 2) Are they called to FR chaplaincy? If they conclude that their church or denomination is the right place for them, they should persist in finding ways to gain the church's support as their sending source. If the church refuses to recognize their calling, they should consider that they may not be called to that ministry. On the other hand, if they are resolute concerning their calling to FR chaplaincy despite their church’s refusal to support their call, they should consider whether God is calling them to seek out a church that will. Chaplain candidates seeking an easy path into chaplaincy should not do so at the expense of their church’s qualification requirements, even if that means seeking formal education or spending time in pulpit ministry. Finding a church that will easily afford them a ministerial credential or endorsement is a path that does not show the level of seriousness many COAs or FR agencies seek in their FRCs. This is increasingly true in a ministry that is growing in its professional stature.

---

178 Ibid., 102.
Other Conclusions and Research Suggestions

One significant additional conclusion the researcher drew from this study is that FRCs significantly underestimated their level of burnout. Six FRCs underestimated, and only one overestimated their burnout. Two indicating they were experiencing burnout “not at all” had high PA scores but conversely high EE scores. One FRC who said he was experiencing burnout “to a small extent” had a very low PA and moderate EE. Another who said he was experiencing burnout “to some extent” had very low PA and moderately high EE. Overall, twenty FRCs accurately self-reported their burnout, one reporting “to a great extent,” four reporting “to a small extent,” and fifteen reporting “not at all.” These results indicate that just under one-quarter of chaplains were unaware of their level of burnout, some quite significantly so. This awareness problem reinforces the need for COAs, FR agencies, and FRCs to be proactive in assessing burnout levels and provide training in topics such as burnout, PTSD, STS, compassion fatigue, and self-care.

Age was a significant factor in FRC burnout rates. While PA remained consistent due to the ceiling effect, FBI results showed that EE rates were significantly lower among older participants. FRC interviews revealed several possible explanations for this. First, most of the participants above the age of fifty expressed a sense of perspective gleaned from more years of experience in ministry or prior employment in the police or fire services. Second, many of them had retired from full-time work and thus had more time to dedicate to both chaplaincy and rest. Finally, they expressed a more spiritual approach to their ministries, indicating that they were better able to contextualize the suffering they saw in the light of their faith. Fifteen of twenty-two chaplains over the age of fifty experienced no burnout at all, while only two over fifty displayed higher rates of burnout. A departure from this phenomenon occurs when FRCs exceed twenty
years of ministry experience, which confirms the study by Kondrath, which found that institutional chaplains with that level of experience evidence higher rates of burnout than clergy with over twenty years in the pulpit.\(^{180}\) This study included only two participants who had over twenty years in FRC ministry and exhibited no burnout. Three participants with more than twenty years showed some signs of burnout, including one with burnout “to a great degree.” Future researchers should consider exploring the nexus between age, years in FR chaplaincy, and FR chaplaincy burnout.

Many chaplains referenced the importance of their FRC or other peer networks. This study did not measure peer network relationships against burnout, but the literature does speak to the importance of these networks.\(^{181}\) Several chaplains stated that they received more emotional support from their FRC peers than from pastors or other clergy in their sphere. Some chaplains had developed close friendships with other pastors or trusted fellow believers with whom they regularly met for encouragement. However, a few FRCs stated that they were afraid to share their experiences dealing with trauma with others who did not have the training or frame of reference to process the imagery and loss they encountered. One FRC likewise stated that he did not believe his pastors could relate to the nature of chaplaincy calls and that his educational level, which far exceeded theirs, created an extra relational barrier. The result of such concerns drives many FRCs to seek other FRCs as confidants with whom they can freely share the extraordinary grief and loss they regularly confront. The results of previous studies give mixed reviews on peer support.\(^{182}\) However, many of those studies examined artificially derived peer groups, as opposed to those that this study’s FRCs developed organically.


\(^{182}\) Miles and Proeschold-Bell, “Overcoming the Challenges,” 199, 215.
The deficiency in pastoral participation in this study begs the question of their engagement with local missions. Future research in pastoral ministry could help address what appears to be a shortcoming in clergy capacity to look outside of the church to activate community engagement. Some pastors and denominations share a dichotomous view of ministry that includes only the pulpit nearby and foreign missions far, far away. In between, one may find an abundance of ministry opportunities. FR chaplaincy is one of those opportunities. It is possible that a false sense of a predominantly Christian culture in America has lulled the church into a comfortable lethargy that constrains ministry to what happens within the safe confines of church buildings. An increasingly secularized American culture may well demand discomfort and a shift of focus to what is happening outside.

Several other areas of future study have already been mentioned, including the impact of COVID-19 on FR chaplaincy and the struggles of women in FR ministry. In the latter case, the researcher continues to encourage women to examine their calling and the willingness of the church from which they are seeking support to recognize it. The number of denominations and churches that support women in ministry is not the barrier that it once was, and chaplaincy is one place where there is much support for their presence. Future research should also consider examining high call rates or high incident (particularly traumatic) calls and adrenaline exhaustion in FRCs. This study was not structured to investigate the spiritual practices of the participants, but future studies may explore the effectiveness of various Christian disciplines in the amelioration of burnout. FRC participants also mentioned critical support structures worthy of study, such as family, mentorships, and the importance of theological training in FRC.

---

development. The door is wide open in the field of FR chaplaincy research, and the author hopes that this study will inspire many others to follow and improve upon the foundation he has set.

In sum, the FBI proved an exceptional tool for assessing burnout in FRCs. Additionally, it helped raise awareness among FRCs about their own vulnerability to burnout and their need to adhere to better self-care practices. The FRC interviews and sending source meetings helped highlight the need for both to communicate and establish protocols that serve both the current chaplain and future chaplains. The TPCC Board and Solutions Focus Groups focused on the importance of COAs as intermediaries between the church and the fire and police agencies FRCs serve. The simple intervention strategy of connecting FRCs with their sending sources and encouraging stronger definitions of the FRCs role within church ministries was successful in remediating FRC burnout and ensuring the future success of FRC ministries.

As a final note, this study punctuated the human reality that the destructive nature of isolation finds healing through relational connections. One FRC offered a poignant comment in support of this aspect of the effect of this study on her ministry: “This study has helped me to see that I am not walking alone, though quite often the walk is lonely.” Isolation wears on the emotional and spiritual resources of the clergy.184 If FRCs and chaplain candidates gain nothing else from this study, the researcher hopes that they will gain steel wills to advocate for their own ministries. Having adult conversations with church, denominational, COA, and FR agency leaders is essential to building and maintaining relationships. Ultimately, FRCs must initiate community connections that will foster a healthy and long-lasting ministry. While some of the support structures around them may help foster those relationships, there is no replacement for FRCs boldly acting on the call of God on their lives. They will inevitably face roadblocks.

184 Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 274.
However, some relational obstacles may only be perceived and not actual. Studies demonstrate that clergy's low perceptions of their support are not always equal to the vast amount available to them.\textsuperscript{185} The only way the FRC may find help or overcome obstacles is to connect with the stakeholders in their ministry and ask for the resources they need. Most importantly, they must not forget to ask God.\textsuperscript{186} However, He will not act as a stand-in for a chaplain’s responsibility to ask for the surrounding community's support. As Jesus encouraged, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{185} Eagle, Hybels, and Proeschold-Bell, “Perceived Social Support,” 2055.

\textsuperscript{186} Staley, “Strategies,” 846. As previously noted, Staley points out that clergy should recognize a “complete reliance upon God” in their ministries.

\textsuperscript{187} Mt. 7:7-8.
December 30, 2020

Christopher Bassett
Brian Bohlman

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-331 First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

Dear Christopher Bassett, Brian Bohlman:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
April 23, 2021

Christopher Bassett  
Brian Bohlman

Re: Modification - IRB-FY20-21-331 First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

Dear Christopher Bassett, Brian Bohlman:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY20-21-331 First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures.

Decision: Exempt - Limited IRB

Your request to make the following changes has been approved:

1) Combine the meetings with FRCs and sending sources into one meeting.
2) Add a solutions focus group.
3) "Combining the final FRC interview questions into a questionnaire with the 2nd FBI, much as was done with the first FBI. The questions added to the online FBI will be the same, with minor modifications in wording, to those originally in the final interview for FRCs. No additional questions were added to the questionnaire."
4) "Sending the final Sending Source interview questions as a questionnaire via email instead of conducting interviews. The questions asked of the Sending Sources are the same, with minor modifications in wording, to those originally in the final interview for Sending Sources."
5) "Deleting the questions to FRCs and Sending Sources from the Final Interviews document and making minor wording changes to suit that document to solely a final Board Focus Group questions document."

Thank you for complying with the IRB’s requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP  
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research  
Research Ethics Office
Bibliography


184


Appendix A.1: In-Person FBI Introduction

Greetings, fellow chaplains. You are being asked to participate in a study to assess the strengths of your connections with your “sending sources” – those denominations, churches, and/or licensing agencies who have “sent” you into First Responder (FR) chaplaincy ministry – and the relationship between these connections and your current level of ministry burnout. The goal of the study is to help you and future chaplains develop stronger connections with your sending sources in order to ameliorate burnout in your ministry. The requirements for eligibility to participate in this study include being 18 years of age or older and affiliation with Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy or having graduated from the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. You must also be an active or prospective (recruited) chaplain with a police or fire (first responder) agency.

Chaplain and Doctoral Candidate Chris Bassett is conducting this study in partnership with T-PCC so that future chaplains, with T-PCC and elsewhere, may benefit from your experiences, both good and bad. Your participation and honest, well-considered answers to all questions will be a tremendous help to this study and will prepare T-PCC to assist First Responder Chaplains (FRCs) with a great start to their ministries and long, healthy careers sharing the Gospel with First Responders. Participants will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (5 minutes), take the Francis Burnout Inventory at the start and end of the study (10-15 minutes each), provide contact information for their sending source, participate in a meeting with their sending source (up to one hour), and participate in interviews following each iteration of the Francis Burnout Inventory (up to one hour each). This process is anticipated to run over the course of about 4-5 months. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Please take a moment to read and sign the consent form if you choose to participate. Then, please complete the FBI and demographic questionnaire. When you have completed them, please turn them in to me. As you read through the FBI, please answer the questions regarding how you feel regarding your participation in chaplaincy ministry over the course of the past few months.
Appendix A.2: Chaplain Participant Consent Form

Title of the Project: First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

Principal Investigator: Christopher A. Bassett, M.Div., TPCC Chaplain, Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and an active or prospective (recruited) chaplain of a First Responder Agency (Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Response) representing any of the Christian faith traditions. You must also be affiliated with the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy or a graduate of the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout. Sending sources include churches, denominations, or licensing agents that ordain, license, or endorse chaplains into First Responder Ministry. First Responder Chaplains are those chaplains serving police officers, sheriff’s deputies, firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and those in closely related fields engaged in immediate, emergent responses to criminal, fire, and medical activities typically associated with 9-1-1 calls.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Take the Francis Burnout Inventory. This inventory is an assessment of burnout among clergy adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory by Dr. Leslie Francis. It should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The results of your FBI will be kept confidential by the researcher. This test may be taken in-person or online. Included with the FBI is a brief demographic survey that must be completed.

2. Make yourself available to the researcher for an interview of no more than one hour. This interview may be conducted in person, by phone, or by internet-enabled communications such as Zoom or MS Teams. The interview will be recorded but will be kept confidential by the researcher. No private information about you or your responses will be released by the researcher from this interview and any references to or quotes taken from the interview will not include any identifying information about you. The interview will be conducted to let you know your FBI results and to discuss your experiences with your sending source, as well as to gain your input as to how to improve sending source support for First Responder Chaplains.

3. Make yourself available for a future conference with your sending source. The purpose of this conference will be to collaboratively develop means of ordination, licensing, endorsement, or commissioning, along with modes of continuing support, that will help you and future chaplains gain the maximum support of your sending sources. This conference will be conducted via conference call, internet-enabled communications, or in-person meeting and should take no more than one hour.
4. Take the FBI a second time to assess changes in your perception of your level of burnout.

5. Participate in a final interview of no more than one hour to get your reflections on the outcome of the study intervention and its effects on your level of burnout as reflected in your second FBI result.

### Benefits of participating in this study

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are improved spiritual mentorship by your sending source, possible improvement in material support, improved affirmation of your ministry as a pastoral and missional calling, and an impartation and anointing for ministry to First Responders and the communities they serve. A further benefit you may receive is a reduction in your present level of ministry burnout.

The benefits to society at large include a spiritually fit and anointed chaplain who better ministers the love of Jesus Christ to First Responders and who is less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in chaplaincy ministry. A further benefit to the profession of First Responder Chaplaincy is the establishment of methods and means to ensure future chaplains are well supported by and better connected to their sending sources and (if affiliated) T-PCC at the outset of their ministry calling, creating better-equipped chaplains who are less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in their ministries.

### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. In some cases, chaplains may experience discomfort in the realization that they are, indeed, experiencing burnout in their present ministries.

Mandatory Reporting Disclaimer: The researcher is a mandatory reporter under the laws of the State of Washington. Any disclosures in the process of future interviews related to child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others will trigger the mandatory reporting process for the researcher.

### Protection of personal information

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes instead of actual participant names, church or denomination names, or other identifying monikers. Interviews will be conducted in a location or by means of the interviewee’s choice where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will initially be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Personally identifiable data will be stored on a password-locked, encrypted data storage device that does not connect to the internet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
• Interviews and meetings will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked, non-internet enabled, encrypted storage device for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
• Data and statistical analysis will be conducted by a contracted, outside source.

### Conflicts of Interest

The researcher is a police agency chaplain who serves within the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy (T-PCC). The study is being conducted with the support of T-PCC, but T-PCC has agreed that they exercise no control over the conduct of the study. Further, T-PCC has agreed that they have no right to access any of the information in the study until the study is released in its final form. T-PCC understands that participants’ personal information in connection to their participation in this study are matters held under strict confidentiality and they will not be given any information regarding their chaplains or those chaplains who have attended the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. T-PCC may be requested to participate in conferences with sending sources only with the permission of the participants. T-PCC has offered to fund statistical analysis for this study but also recognizes that this does not change the confidential nature of personal information obtained in the course of this study. Statistical analysis of FBI results will be provided in raw, aggregated numbers only, with all personally identifiable information removed. The researcher expresses gratitude for the support of T-PCC in this study.

### Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Christopher A. Bassett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via his cell phone, (deleted), or his email, (deleted). You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian L. Bohlman, at (deleted).

### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above. If you are agreeing to participate in this study and are doing so virtually, your submission of this consent form with a digital signature of your choice will be considered as equally valid as a signature by hand.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to record our interviews or meetings via audio, video, or internet data recording device as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________
Printed Subject Name

____________________________________
Signature & Date
Appendix A.3: Chaplain Recruitment Email

To all Graduates of the Police and Fire Chaplains Academy and Police and Fire Chaplains of TPCC

Dear Chaplain:

As a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout.

You are invited to participate in this research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and an active or prospective (recruited) chaplain of a First Responder Agency (Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Response) representing any of the Christian faith traditions. You must also be affiliated with the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy or have graduated from the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (5 minutes), take the Francis Burnout Inventory at the start and end of the study (10-15 minutes each), provide contact information for their sending source and participate in a meeting with their sending source (up to one hour), and participate in interviews following each iteration of the Francis Burnout Inventory (up to one hour each). This process is anticipated to run over the course of about 4-5 months. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please review the attached consent form. After you have reviewed the consent form please sign it and email to me at the email address listed below. After you have emailed the signed consent form you may click here (deleted) to complete the Francis Burnout Inventory and demographic questionnaire.

Thank you for being willing to help with this study. I look forward to being in contact with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Bassett
Chaplain, Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
Appendix A.4: TPCC Board Participation Consent Form

**Title of the Project:** First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

**Principal Investigator:** Christopher A. Bassett, CH (COL) USAR, T-PCC Chaplain, M.Div., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

---

**Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and a member of the Board of Directors of Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

---

**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout. Sending sources include churches, denominations, or licensing agents that ordain, license, or endorse chaplains into First Responder Ministry. First Responder Chaplains are those chaplains serving police officers, sheriff’s deputies, firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and those in closely related fields engaged in immediate, emergent responses to criminal, fire, and medical activities typically associated with 9-1-1 calls.

---

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a focus group with the other members of the Board of Directors of T-PCC. This focus group will take approximately one hour and will be recorded in order to provide a transcript for use in deriving information and quotes that will be used in the study. Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher. No private information about you or your responses will be released by the researcher from this focus group and any references to or quotes taken from the focus group will not include any identifying information about you.

2. Participate in a closing focus group at the end of the study to share your perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention and its impact upon the chaplains and ministry efforts of T-PCC. As in the first focus group, the closing group discussion will be recorded and subject to the same confidentiality conditions noted above. This focus group discussion should take no more than one hour.

3. Focus Group Participants: Provide information candidly and with the understanding that any individual or group discussions will be held confidential by the researcher. However, the researcher cannot guarantee that participants in the group process will hold confidential the content of group discussions.

4. The approximate duration of the study is 4-5 months.
Benefits of participating in this study

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are improved spiritual mentorship by their sending sources, possible improvement in material support, improved affirmation of their ministries as a pastoral and missional calling, and an impartation and anointing for ministry to First Responders and the communities they serve. A further benefit they may receive is a reduction in their present level of ministry burnout.

The benefits to Sending Sources, T-PCC, and society at large include a spiritually fit and anointed chaplain who better ministers the love of Jesus Christ to First Responders and who is less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in chaplaincy ministry. A further benefit to the profession of First Responder Chaplaincy is the establishment of methods and means to ensure future chaplains are well supported by and better connected to their sending sources and (if affiliated) T-PCC at the outset of their ministry calling, creating better-equipped chaplains who are less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in their ministries.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Mandatory Reporting Disclaimer: The researcher is a mandatory reporter under the laws of the State of Washington. Any disclosures made by participants related to child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others will trigger the mandatory reporting process for the researcher.

Protection of personal information

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes instead of actual participant names, church or denomination names, or other identifying monikers.
- Data will initially be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Personally identifiable data will be stored on a password-locked, encrypted data storage device that does not connect to the internet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- The focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked, non-internet enabled, encrypted storage device for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data and statistical analysis will be conducted by a contracted, outside source.

Conflicts of Interest
The researcher is a police agency chaplain who serves within the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy (T-PCC). The study is being conducted with the support of T-PCC, but T-PCC has agreed that they exercise no control over the conduct of the study. Further, T-PCC has agreed that they have no right to access any of the information in the study until the study is released in its final form. T-PCC understands that participants’ personal information in connection to their participation in this study are matters held under strict confidentiality and they will not be given any information regarding their chaplains or those chaplains who have attended the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. T-PCC may be requested to participate in conferences with sending sources only with the permission of the participants. T-PCC has offered to fund statistical analysis for this study but also recognizes that this does not change the confidential nature of personal information obtained in the course of this study. Statistical analysis of FBI results will be provided in raw, aggregated numbers only, with all personally identifiable information removed. The researcher expresses gratitude for the support of T-PCC in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Christopher A. Bassett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via his cell phone, (deleted), or his email, (deleted). You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian L. Bohlman, at (deleted).

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu

Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the
study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above. If you are agreeing to participate in this study and are doing so virtually, your submission of this consent form with a digital signature of your choice will be considered as equally valid as a signature by hand.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to record our interviews or group discussions via audio, video, or internet data recording device as part of my participation in this study.

___________________________________________
Printed Participant Name

___________________________________________
Signature & Date
Appendix A.5: Sending Source Consent Form

Title of the Project: First Responder Chaplaincy: Sending Sources as Key Social Support Structures

Principal Investigator: Christopher A. Bassett, CH (COL) USAR, T-PCC Chaplain, M.Div., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a representative of the sending source (denomination, church, or endorsing or commissioning agent) of a chaplain of a First Responder Agency (Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Response) representing any of the Christian faith traditions. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout. Sending sources include churches, denominations, or endorsing agents that ordain, license, endorse, or otherwise commission chaplains into First Responder Ministry. First Responder Chaplains are those chaplains serving police officers, sheriff’s deputies, firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and those in closely related fields engaged in immediate, emergent responses to criminal, fire, and medical activities typically associated with 9-1-1 calls.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Make yourself available to the researcher for an interview of no more than one hour. This interview may be conducted in person, by phone, or by internet-enabled communications such as Zoom or MS Teams. The interview will be recorded but will be kept confidential by the researcher. No private information about you or your responses will be released by the researcher from these interviews and any references to or quotes taken from the interviews will not include any identifying information about you.

2. Participate in a conference with the researcher, your chaplain, and (optionally) a representative of Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. This conference will also be recorded under the same confidentiality conditions as above. The purpose of this conference will be to collaboratively develop means of ordination, licensing, endorsement, or commissioning, along with modes of continuing support, that will help maximize the support your chaplain receives and the ministry impact of your organization. This conference will be conducted via conference call, internet-enabled communications, or in-person and should take no more than one hour.

3. Participate in a final interview of no more than one hour to get your reflections on the outcome of the study intervention and its effects on your chaplain’s ministry efforts.
4. Provide information candidly and with the understanding that any individual or group discussions will be held confidential by the researcher. However, the researcher cannot guarantee that participants in the group process will hold confidential the content of group discussions.

Benefits of participating in this study

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are improved spiritual mentorship by their sending sources, possible improvement in material support, improved affirmation of their ministry as a pastoral and missional calling, and an impartation and anointing for ministry to First Responders and the communities they serve. A further benefit they may receive is a reduction in their present level of ministry burnout.

The benefits to Sending Sources, T-PCC, and society at large include a spiritually fit and anointed chaplain who better ministers the love of Jesus Christ to First Responders and who is less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in chaplaincy ministry. A further benefit to the profession of First Responder Chaplaincy is the establishment of methods and means to ensure future chaplains are well supported by and better connected to their sending sources and (if affiliated) T-PCC at the outset of their ministry calling, creating better-equipped chaplains who are less likely to suffer the effects of burnout in their ministries.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Mandatory Reporting Disclaimer: The researcher is a mandatory reporter under the laws of the State of Washington. Any disclosures in the process of future interviews related to child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others will trigger the mandatory reporting process for the researcher.

Protection of personal information

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes instead of actual participant names, church or denomination names, or other identifying monikers. Interviews will be conducted in a location or by means of the interviewee’s choice where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will initially be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Personally identifiable data will be stored on a password-locked, encrypted data storage device that does not connect to the internet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
• Interviews and conferences will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked, non-internet enabled, encrypted storage device for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
• Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in conference settings. While discouraged, other members of the conference may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher is a police agency chaplain who serves within the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy (T-PCC). The study is being conducted with the support of T-PCC, but T-PCC has agreed that they exercise no control over the conduct of the study. Further, T-PCC has agreed that they have no right to access any of the information in the study until the study is released in its final form. T-PCC understands that participants’ personal information in connection to their participation in this study are matters held under strict confidentiality and they will not be given any information regarding their chaplains or those chaplains who have attended the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. T-PCC may be requested to participate in conferences with sending sources only with the permission of the participants. T-PCC has offered to fund statistical analysis for this study but also recognizes that this does not change the confidential nature of personal information obtained in the course of this study. Statistical analysis of FBI results will be provided in raw, aggregated numbers only, with all personally identifiable information removed. The researcher expresses gratitude for the support of T-PCC in this study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher conducting this study is Christopher A. Bassett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via his cell phone, (deleted), or his email, (deleted). You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian L. Bohlman, at (deleted).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu

---

**Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above. If you are agreeing to participate in this study and are doing so virtually, your submission of this consent form with a digital signature of your choice will be considered as equally valid as a signature by hand.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

☐ The researcher has my permission to record our interviews or group discussions via audio, video, or internet data recording device as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________
Printed Participant Name

____________________________________
Signature & Date
Appendix A.6: Chaplain Recruitment Email

Dear Chaplain:

As a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout.

You are invited to participate in this research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and an active or prospective (recruited) chaplain of a First Responder Agency (Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Response) representing any of the Christian faith traditions. You must also be affiliated with the Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy or have graduated from the Police and Fire Chaplains Training Academy. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (5 minutes), take the Francis Burnout Inventory at the start and end of the study (10-15 minutes each), provide contact information for their sending source and participate in a meeting with their sending source (up to one hour), and participate in interviews following each iteration of the Francis Burnout Inventory (up to one hour each). This process is anticipated to run over the course of about 4-5 months. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE: Please review the attached consent form. After you have reviewed the consent form please DIGITALLY SIGN OR TYPE YOUR NAME IN THE SIGNATURE BLOCK and email to me at the email address (deleted). After you have emailed the signed consent form you may click here (deleted) to complete the Francis Burnout Inventory and demographic questionnaire.

Thank you for being willing to help with this study. I look forward to being in contact with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Bassett
Chaplain, Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
Appendix B.1: Francis Burnout Inventory

The following questions are about how you feel working in your present ministry. Please read the sentence carefully and think ‘how true is this of me?’

If you *Agree Strongly*, put a ring round..........................  AS A NC D DS
If you *Agree*, put a ring round.............................. AS A NC D DS
If you *are Not Certain*, put a ring round...................... AS A NC D DS
If you *Disagree*, put a ring round.......................... AS A NC D DS
If you *Disagree Strongly*, put a ring round................... AS A NC D DS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel drained in fulfilling my ministry roles</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my current ministry</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people in my current ministry</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I deal very effectively with the problems of people in my current ministry</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily understand how those among whom I minister feel</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always have enthusiasm for my work</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very positive about my current ministry</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My humor has a cynical or biting tone</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my chaplain ministry has a positive influence on people’s lives</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself spending less and less time with those among</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my chaplain ministry has a positive influence on people’s faith</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been discouraged by the lack of personal support for me here</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my ministry is really appreciated by people</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am really glad I entered the ministry</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am less patient with those among whom I minister than I used to be</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with those among</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my ministry roles</td>
<td>AS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

204
Appendix B.2: Demographic Questionnaire

Name: _______________________________________________________

Age: _____ Years in First Responder Ministry: _____ Years with Present Agency: _____

Full Name of Police, Fire, or Other Agency Served: ______________________________________

Highest level of formal ministry education attained: ______________________________________

Additional sources of ministry education (CPE, CEs, CISM, etc.): ________________________

Sending source contact information (name, phone, email): ______________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

I am presently experiencing burnout in my chaplaincy ministry… (circle one)
   *To a great extent    *To some extent    *To a small extent    *Not at all

My sending source provides me _____ support… (circle one)
   *Much    *Some    *Little    *No    *I have no sending source

My sending source affirmed my FR chaplaincy ministry through (circle all that apply):
   *License    *Ordination    *Credential    *Formal Ceremony    *Endorsement

My sending source recognizes FR chaplains as _____ ministers (circle all that apply):
   *Pastoral    *Evangelistic    *Missionary    *Lay    *Does not recognize as ministers

My sending source is a… (circle one)
   *Denomination    *Church    *Other Endorser    *None/Self

My relationship with my local church is as… (circle one)
   *On Staff    *Pastor    *Other Leadership    *Congregant    *None

Explanations or comments you would like to offer…
Appendix C.1: First Interviews, Chaplain Participants

Good morning/afternoon. As a chaplain who has agreed to be a participant in this study you are now being asked answer a few questions, as well as discuss your Francis Burnout Inventory results. I am recording this interview to ensure that information and quotes contained in the interview are full and accurate. As previously discussed, this recording will be retained by me in a password-secured computer until it can be transcribed and transferred to an encrypted, external data storage device that is not connected to the internet. After 3 years, all of this information will be deleted. Will you now consent to this interview being recorded? (Yes/No)

You have completed the Francis Burnout Inventory and a demographic questionnaire prior to this interview:

1) Please verify your information as provided in the demographic questionnaire.
2) Would you like to clarify any of the information you provided in the questionnaire?
3) How did you feel about your answers as you took the FBI?
4) Could you describe the method by which your sending source commissioned, ordained, or otherwise affirmed your entry into FR chaplaincy ministry?
5) How do you feel your ministry has been affected by your sending source’s understanding and affirmation of your chaplaincy ministry?
6) What theological underpinning guides how your sending source views FR chaplaincy?
7) Do you receive any on-going support from your sending source? If so, what kind(s)?
8) What are your other sources of social support for your ministry?
9) How would you evaluate the impact of each of your sources of social support upon your chaplaincy ministry?
10) Would you be willing to participate in meeting with your sending source and me at a later date in order to discuss how to improve your connection with your sending source?
11) Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share or questions you would like to ask?
Appendix C.2: Board of Directors Focus Group

Good evening, members of the board, and thank you, not only for your willingness to offer your support to this study, but also to become participants in finding the solution to the problem as stated, “A lack of support structures leads some FRCs to experience frustration and ultimately burnout in their ministries.” As an instructor at the PFCTA I noted after informally surveying students that approximately one third had not been affirmed in their ministry by their church, denomination, or licensing agent – groups that this study identifies as “sending sources.”

The church is a tremendously important sending support structure for ministers. The conferral of spiritual authority through some form of blessing, from a simple prayer and the laying on of hands to a full ordination ceremony, as well as a commitment to on-going support and a theological understanding of the pastoral and local missions role of chaplains, is an essential foundation for longevity and effectiveness in ministry. As you know, chaplaincy is fraught not only with the stress of the traumatic incidents to which they respond, but also with the daily life struggles of police officers and firefighters and the sometimes-difficult personal struggles in their own lives. Without the church supporting them they face the looming menace of burnout, which is often evidenced in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of or withdrawal from those to whom they minister, and a decreased sense personal achievement. This, of course, leads to ministers who cease to be effective and often leave ministry altogether in frustration. The goal of this study is to focus on a narrow portion of this problem, the support structure of the church, the sending source, and to find ways to strengthen the connections First Responder chaplains have with their sending sources. I am asking you to be my focus group as stakeholders in TPCC’s mission to provide the best chaplains possible to our First Responders.

You have been provided an informed consent form that I would like you to read and sign at this time. (Give time for them to read and sign.)

Without looking for immediate solutions to the problem, I have several discussion starters to offer. With your verbal consent, I would like to record this discussion. The sole purpose for this recording is to gain verbatim comments for inclusion in the study as anonymous quotes that help share the perspectives of board members as they consider the problem.

1) What has been your perception of the support new chaplains have received from their sending sources upon entry into First Responder chaplaincy and how do you believe that impacts their ministry in the long term?

2) What does TPCC expect of chaplaincy candidates in relation to their connection to sending sources, such as churches, denominations, or licensing agents?

3) What does TPCC expect of sending sources in relation to their connection with the chaplains they endorse for FRC ministry?

4) TPCC does not license, ordain, or endorse chaplains, but what do you believe that TPCC could do to help chaplains who may have tenuous or no connections to a sending source?

5) Do you have any other thoughts on this subject that you would like to share or questions you would like to ask?
Appendix D.1: Sending Source Recruitment Email

Dear Pastor or Ministry Representative:

As a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry Degree. The purpose of my research is to assess the adequacy of sending source support structures among First Responder Chaplains in order to remediate ministry burnout.

You have been identified as the “sending source” of a First Responder Chaplain that is participating in this study. A sending source is defined as a church, denomination, or licensing agent that ordains, endorses, or otherwise licenses or commissions a First Responder Chaplain (Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Response) representing a Christian Faith Tradition. You are being asked to participate in this research study in support of the chaplain with whom you are in ministry partnership. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and the appropriate agent of the chaplain’s sending source. Participants will be asked to take part in an interview, either in person or via Zoom, with the researcher and your chaplain. The interview will take less than one hour. There will also be a final interview conducted by the researcher that will take less than one half hour and will occur approximately one month after the initial interview. All interviews will be recorded for the sole purpose of gaining verbatim quotes for this study and names or other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please read and sign the consent form attached to this email. The consent form contains additional information about my research. After you have read and signed the consent form, please send it to me at the below email address. After you have sent the consent form and coordinated with your chaplain, you may set an appointment with me at (deleted). If you have any questions, you may call me at my cell number or contact me via the email listed below.

Thank you so much for your consideration of this important study that will support our efforts to improve First Responder Chaplaincy and strengthen our First Responder Chaplains.

Christopher A. Bassett
Chaplain, Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
Appendix D.2: Sending Source Interviews

Introduction: “Good morning/afternoon, and thank you, not only for your willingness to offer your support to this study, but also to become participants in finding the solution to the problem as stated, “A lack of support structures leads some FRCs to experience frustration and ultimately burnout in their ministries.” As an ordained minister, military chaplain, police chaplain, and instructor at the PFCTA I noted after informally surveying students that approximately one third had not been affirmed in their ministry by their church, denomination, or licensing agent – groups that this study identifies as “sending sources.”

“The church is a tremendously important sending support structure for ministers. The conferral of spiritual authority through some form of blessing, from a simple prayer and the laying on of hands to a full ordination ceremony, a commitment to on-going support, and a theological understanding of the pastoral and local missions role of chaplains, is an essential foundation for longevity and effectiveness in ministry. As you may know, chaplaincy is fraught not only with the stress of the traumatic incidents to which they respond, but also with the daily life struggles of police officers and firefighters and sometimes difficult personal struggles in their own lives. Without the church supporting them they face the looming menace of burnout, which is often evidenced in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of or withdrawal from those to whom they minister, and a decreased sense personal achievement. This, of course, leads to ministers who cease to be effective and often leave the ministry altogether in frustration. The goal of this study is to focus on a narrow portion of this problem, the support structure of the church, the sending source, and to find ways to strengthen the connections First Responder chaplains have with their sending sources. Tonight I am asking you to become a participant in this study in order to help you provide the best chaplains possible to our First Responders. Without looking for immediate solutions to the problem, I have several questions to ask. With your verbal consent, I would like to record this interview. No names will be provided in the published study and the recording will be kept by me, not to be released to anyone without their express permission. The sole purpose for this recording is to gain verbatim comments for inclusion in the study as anonymous quotes that help share the perspectives of board members as they consider the problem. Do you consent to allowing this conversation to be recorded?”

The questions will vary slightly depending upon the type of sending source contacted, however they will generally follow these steps:

1) What is your relationship to the FRC?

2) What theological underpinnings guide your agency’s understanding of First Responder chaplaincy as a ministry?

3) Do you formally recognize or endorse FRCs as a pastoral or local missions ministry?

4) What ceremonies or affirmations do you provide those entering into FR chaplaincy?

5) What on-going training, mentoring, or oversight do you provide your FRCs?
6) Do you provide any material support to your FRCs?

7) What educational or vocational requirements do you have for FR chaplaincy?

8) Have you formally ordained, endorsed, licensed, or otherwise ecclesiastically recognized the ministry of this FRC?

9) What would you like to see in a relationship with this FRC?

10) How can First Responder Chaplaincy organizational (parachurch) ministries support your relationship with your FRC?

11) Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share or any questions you would like to ask?
Appendix D.3: Solutions Focus Group

Good morning. You have been asked to participate in a focus group to develop solutions to better link FRCs and their sending sources, as well as to help FRC organizational ministries such as TPCC better communicate with sending sources in order to provide the best chaplains to First Responder Agencies and ensure those chaplains gain and maintain support from their sending sources to act as a buffer to ministry burnout. You have each signed consent forms agreeing to participate in this study and have our conversations recorded. Do you agree at this time to having this focus group interview recorded? (Await confirmation from each participant.)

Discussions with sending sources have included the following possible tools to create better connections between FRCs, their sending sources, and FR chaplaincy organizational ministries:

1) Develop better lines of communication.
2) FRC organizational ministries should conduct prayer breakfasts/lunches for area pastors to share about First Responder Chaplaincy.
3) FRC organizational ministries sending quarterly (max monthly) newsletters to inform about FRC ministry. These must be limited so that it’s not overkill in their email inboxes.
4) FRC organizational ministries should provide educational material to tell sending sources what FRCs do, how the church can support them, what kind of vetting and qualification expectations the church should help with when sending a chaplain to an agency (whether to a PD/FD or through a KCSO Chaplaincy, Charteris, or TPCC), and what kind of support their chaplains are getting outside of the church.

Think about this question: What initial guidance and information can an agency give to a church or denomination to help them prepare a FRC for ministry before giving them their stamp of approval?

Also think about suggestion 2, above. What creative ways can FRC organizational ministries reach more churches/denominations to recruit potential chaplains and inform sending sources about FRC ministry and requirements for FRCs to serve FR agencies?
Appendix D.4: Solutions Focus Group Questionnaires for Chaplain Candidate and Sending Sources

Tacoma Pierce County Chaplaincy

Endorsement Questionnaire for Chaplain Candidate
(If additional space is needed for some answers, please use a separate sheet of paper and attach)

Your name: ___________________________ Phone Number: ___________________________

Your Email address: _______________________

Church or faith-based organization where you serve: ______________________________

Mailing Address: ________________________________

Name of representative issuing endorsement on behalf of the organization: _______________________

Phone Number: ___________________________ Email address: _______________________

1. What is your role with your church or faith-based organization?
   □ Ordained pastor or associate pastor  □ Director of a ministry or program within the organization
   □ Ordained Deacon  □ Other (please name)
   □ Lay deacon or elder

2. Please provide some detail of your role, responsibilities, and service within your church or faith-based organization. How long have you served in this current organization and role?

3. Have you served in congregational ministry or other service to a faith-based organization prior to your current organization and role? Please list each organization and indicate your role and the nature of your service for each.

4. Have you served as a first responder chaplain elsewhere in the past? If so, for how long? (Please list the name of each agency and number of years served.)
5. Do you have any other prior relationship (professional or volunteer) with any first responder agencies? Please describe (listing each agency and role).

6. Do you have any prior experience (whether in your current or previous roles) in assisting people who have experienced (or are experiencing) trauma or grief? Please elaborate. If you have no such experience, please tell us why you feel you would excel in such a role, given appropriate training and experience. (Please use another sheet of paper and attach as needed.)

7. Do you have any prior formal training in grief counseling, trauma counseling, or similar counseling or therapy? Please elaborate.

8. Have you ever experienced burn-out or any level of anxiety or depression in your service to your church or other faith-based organization? If so, in what ways did/do you deal with it?

9. Has a clear understanding and agreement been reached between you and the agency desiring to utilize you as their first responder chaplain concerning your specific duties, including an approximate time commitment?

10. Have you had in-depth conversations with the pastor or other appropriate overseer and/or the appropriate governing board of your church or faith-based organization? Has the above information concerning the details of your potential service as a first responder chaplain (including approximate time commitment) been clearly conveyed in these conversations?

11. Has your church or faith-based organization indicated that they are willing to “share” you with first responder chaplaincy given the expectations of that service? Do they consent to serve as your sending source? Are they willing to complete the form for endorsement of your service as a first responder chaplain?

12. Are you willing to commit to TPCC’s five-full-day chaplain academy in either May or October? (If you have already attended and graduated from this academy, simply put, “graduated.”)
Tacoma Pierce County Chaplaincy

Questionnaire for The Chaplain Candidate’s Sending Source

This form is to be completed by someone authorized to speak on behalf of the candidate’s church or faith-based organization, and with the agreement of the pastor or other overseer and the appropriate governing board

PLEASE DO NOT HAVE THE CANDIDATE FILL THIS OUT THEMSELVES.

(If additional space is needed for some answers, please use a separate sheet of paper and attach)

Church or faith-based organization name: __________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

Name of representative issuing endorsement on behalf of the organization: _________________________

Phone Number: __________________ Email address: ________________________________

1. What is the candidate’s role with your organization?
   - [ ] Ordained pastor or associate pastor
   - [ ] Ordained Deacon
   - [ ] Lay deacon or elder
   - [ ] Director of a ministry or program within the organization
   - [ ] Other (please name) __________________________

2. Please provide some detail of the candidate’s role, responsibilities, and service within your church or faith-based organization.

3. How long has the candidate served your organization? If their service has included any other role or capacity prior to their current position, please list those roles and describe each.

4. Has your organization ever previously had someone serving who was serving as a first responder chaplain? If so, was that arrangement experienced positively by your organization? (Please elaborate, especially regarding any negative aspects of such arrangements.)

5. Does your organization have (or has it had) any other prior relationship with any first responder agencies? Please describe.

6. Please provide your assessment of the candidate’s experience and proficiency in assisting people who have experienced (or are experiencing) trauma or grief. Please give as much detail as possible. If the
candidate has no such experience, please tell us why you believe they would excel in such a capacity, given appropriate training and experience. (Please use another sheet of paper and attach as needed.)

7. Has the candidate received any prior formal training in grief counseling, trauma counseling, or similar counseling or therapy in connection to their service with your organization? Please elaborate.

8. Have you ever observed the candidate to have experienced burn-out or any level of anxiety or depression in their service to your organization? If so, in what ways did they deal with it in your observation?

9. To your understanding, has a clear understanding and agreement been reached between the candidate and the agency desiring to utilize them as a first responder chaplain, concerning their specific duties, including an approximate time commitment?

10. Has the candidate had in-depth conversations with the pastor or other appropriate overseer and/or the appropriate governing board of your organization? Has the above information concerning the details of the candidate’s potential service as a first responder chaplain (including approximate time commitment) been clearly conveyed in these conversations?

11. Is your organization willing to “share” the candidate with first responder chaplaincy given the expectations of that service? Does your organization consent to serve as the sending source for the candidate?

12. Is your organization able to allow the candidate to commit to TPCC’s five-full-day chaplain academy in either May or October? (If the candidate has already attended and graduated from this academy, simply put, “graduated.”)
Appendix D.5: TPCC Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Dear applicant,

Serving as a Public Safety Chaplain means that you will be consistently exposed to other people’s grief, pain, and trauma. You will be called upon to minister to victims of tragic incidents such as homicide, suicide, motor vehicle accidents, domestic violence, overdoses, sudden infant deaths, and structure fires. You will also serve First Responders who are also consistently exposed to trauma and sometimes need a confidential and competent resource to turn to for assistance in dealing with the acute and cumulative stress that naturally accompanies a career in public safety.

Whether serving a citizen or a First Responder, you will see how traumatic events and exposure to trauma can disorient and overwhelm a person. Left unmitigated, trauma can send a person down a path that leads to destructive or even lethal behavior. Public Safety Chaplains are called to intervene and serve those who struggle to carry the emotional, psychological, and spiritual burdens that trauma foists upon a person. Your ministry will help people find the hope and strength to avoid a path leading to destruction and instead pursue a course that leads to recovery, resilience, and post-traumatic growth.

Serving people in times of crisis can take a toll on you too, which is why TPCC is committed to properly screening applicants and verifying that they are called and supported in this work before equipping and commissioning them. As a part of our screening process, TPCC requires applicants to obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement from their sending church.

An ecclesiastical endorsement is not the same as ordination and it is not a letter of recommendation. An ecclesiastical endorsement expresses, in detail, the church’s assessment that (a) you are a member in good standing that regularly participates in the life of the church, (b) you have demonstrated the maturity and professionalism desired to represent the church in a ministerial role, (c) you possess adequate ministry and life experience to serve in this mission field, and (d) you have met any/all criteria to be endorsed by the church to deliver spiritual care and counsel to all people in a pluralistic environment. Please note that TPCC does not include officiating marriages in the scope of work for our Public Safety Chaplains.

As you engage your church in the sending process to obtain their ecclesiastical endorsement, please know that I am always available to discuss this in greater detail with you and your church. I look forward to communicating and collaborating with you and your church as we support you in this impactful ministry.

Sincerely,

Ben Harris
Executive Director
Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
Appendix E.1: Sending Source Questionnaire (Email)

Dear Pastor,

I would like to thank you once again for your willingness to participate in the study I have been conducting for my Doctor of Ministry thesis related to First Responder Chaplains (FRCs), their sending sources, and the effects of that relationship on FRC burnout. This questionnaire is the final step in the research phase of this study. It should take between 5 and 30 minutes for you to complete, depending upon how you choose to answer each question.

As we discussed in our Zoom conference, the church is a tremendously important sending support structure for ministers. The conferral of spiritual authority through some form of blessing, a commitment to ongoing support, and a well-developed theological understanding of the pastoral and local missions role of chaplains are essential foundational elements for longevity and effectiveness in ministry. As we also discussed, chaplaincy is fraught not only with the stress of the traumatic incidents to which they respond but also with the daily life struggles of police officers and firefighters and the sometimes-difficult personal struggles in their own lives. Without the church’s support they face the looming menace of burnout, which is often evidenced in personal emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of or withdrawal from those to whom they minister, and a decreased sense of personal achievement. This, of course, leads to ministers who cease to be effective and often leave the ministry altogether in frustration. One goal of this study has been to find and implement a solution that assists in supporting both chaplain and sending source in building closer relationships. It is with this end in mind that I ask that you consider offering your concluding thoughts regarding this study by responding to the following questions. Please answer each question and then reply with your responses to me by email at (deleted).

1) Has the information provided to you during this study been helpful for better connecting you with your FRC? If so, how?
2) How has this study, including contacts you have had with the researcher, TPCC (if connected to TPCC), or your FRC, improved your organization’s ministry efforts?
3) How has this study helped your understanding of what FRCs do?
4) Have you shifted in your understanding of the need for FRCs to be licensed, ordained, or otherwise ecclesiastically affirmed as pastors and/or local missionaries to First Responders? If so, how?
5) What methods of supporting your FRC have you worked out together for the future?
6) Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding your participation in this study?

Once again, thank you for your participation in this study and for supporting your FRC.

Blessings,

Christopher A. Bassett
Chaplain, Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
DMIN Candidate, Liberty University
Appendix E.2: Final Board of Directors Focus Group

Good morning/afternoon and thank you for your willingness to speak with me today. You have been participants in a study for my Doctor of Ministry thesis related to First Responder Chaplains (FRCs), their sending sources, and the effects of that relationship on FRC burnout. This focus group, with your permission, will be recorded to provide the most accurate verbatim recounting of our conversation. Previous agreements about confidentiality of this meeting still apply. Do I have your permission to record the meeting currently? (Yes/No)

The church is a tremendously important sending support structure for ministers. The conferral of spiritual authority through some form of blessing, as well as a commitment to ongoing support and a theological understanding of the pastoral and local missions role of chaplains, is an essential foundation for longevity and effectiveness in ministry. As you know, chaplaincy is fraught not only with the stress of the traumatic incidents to which they respond, but also with the daily life struggles of police officers and firefighters and the sometimes-difficult personal struggles in their own lives. Without the church supporting them they face the looming menace of burnout, which is often evidenced in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of or withdrawal from those to whom they minister, and a decreased sense personal achievement. This, of course, leads to ministers who cease to be effective and often leave the ministry altogether in frustration. One goal of this study has been to find and implement a solution that assists in supporting both chaplain and sending source in building closer relationships. The questions that follow are intended to generate discussion about your impressions of this study and the solutions that have been developed.

To the TPCC Board of Directors Focus Group:

1) How has the conduct of this study helped you to better understand the dynamics of burnout, the importance of the FRC’s connections to their sending sources, and TPCC’s role in helping its FRCs maintain a vital connection with them?
2) What intervention strategies utilized in this study do you see as helpful and sustainable? Which ones were not? Why?
3) How do you believe the Board’s participation in this study has better prepared TPCC to support their FRCs in the future?
4) Has your participation in this study helped you to better carve out the specific roles of TPCC in supporting FRCs and the corresponding expectations of FRC sending sources for the future?
5) Do you believe that you are better prepared to help FRCs avoid burnout as a result of your participation in this study?
6) Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding your participation in this study?
Welcome, Chaplains, to the final step.

I would like to thank you once again for your willingness to participate in the study I have been conducting for my Doctor of Ministry thesis related to First Responder Chaplains (FRCs), their sending sources, and the effects of that relationship on FRC burnout. This questionnaire is the final step in the research phase of this study. It should take between 15 and 30 minutes for you to complete, depending upon how you choose to answer each question.

As we discussed in our interviews, the church is a tremendously important sending support structure for ministers. The conferral of spiritual authority through some form of blessing, a commitment to ongoing support, and a well-developed theological understanding of the pastoral and local missions role of chaplains are essential foundational elements for longevity and effectiveness in ministry. As we also discussed, chaplaincy is fraught not only with the stress of the traumatic incidents to which they respond but also with the daily life struggles of police officers and firefighters and the sometimes-difficult personal struggles in their own lives. Without the church’s support they face the looming menace of burnout, which is often evidenced in personal emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of or withdrawal from those to whom they minister, and a decreased sense of personal achievement. This, of course, leads to ministers who cease to be effective and often leave the ministry altogether in frustration. One goal of this study has been to find and implement a solution that assists in supporting both chaplain and sending source in building closer relationships. It is with this end in mind that I ask that you take this second iteration of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). The first two questions ask for your name and present level of perceived burnout. As you answer the next 22 questions (the FBI), please answer with the last 2-3 months in mind. Please offer your concluding thoughts regarding this study by responding to the numbered questions that follow the FBI. The link to this final battery of questions is [deleted].

Once again, thank you. Your participation in this study has been invaluable.

Blessings,

Christopher A. Bassett
Chaplain, Tacoma-Pierce County Chaplaincy
DMIN Candidate, Liberty University
Appendix E.4: Second FBI/Final Survey

Name: ____________________________________________

I am presently experiencing burnout in my chaplaincy ministry (choose one):

__ To a great extent
__ To some extent
__ To a small extent
__ Not at all
__ Other

Francis Burnout Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following questions are about how you feel working in your present ministry. Please read the sentence carefully and think ‘how true is this of me?’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel drained in fulfilling my ministry roles ................................................................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my current ministry ................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience ................................................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people in my current ministry .................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain .................................................................................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I deal very effectively with the problems of people in my current ministry ....................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work ................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily understand how those among whom I minister feel about things .......................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always have enthusiasm for my work ................................................................................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very positive about my current ministry ..................................................................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My humor has a cynical or biting tone .................................................................................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my chaplain ministry has a positive influence on people’s lives .................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself spending less and less time with those among whom I minister ..................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my chaplain ministry has a positive influence on people’s faith .......................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been discouraged by the lack of personal support for me here ................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my ministry is really appreciated by people .................................................................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me ................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am really glad I entered the ministry ................................................................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am less patient with those among whom I minister than I used to be ............................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life ........................................ AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with those among whom I minister ................. AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my ministry roles ..................................... AS A NC D DS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Survey

1) What are your thoughts about the second FBI you took vis a vis the first one? If there was a significant change, to what would you attribute that change?

2) Has your sending source affirmed your ministry as an FRC since the first time you took the FBI? If so, how? (If you had already been affirmed, simply reply: "Previously affirmed.") If “yes,” how do you feel this has impacted you and your ministry?

3) Do you feel that your connection with your sending source has improved since the study started? If so, how? To what do you attribute this improvement?

4) What other thoughts would you like to share about how this study has helped you, your sending source, or TPCC (if connected to TPCC)?

5) Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding your participation in this study?
My sending source recognizes First Responder Chaplains as ______ ministers (check all that apply)

25 responses

- Pastoral: 11 (44%)
- Evangelistic: 2 (8%)
- Missionary: 5 (20%)
- Lay: 6 (24%)
- Does not recognize as ministers: 1 (4%)
- Does not differentiate: 1 (4%)
- No sending source: 1 (4%)
- na: 1 (4%)
- Specially trained and blessed vs. secular: 1 (4%)
- Jail Chaplains: 1 (4%)
- Law Enforcement Chaplains: 1 (4%)
- I have no idea: 1 (4%)

0.0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5