

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry
for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office**

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

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Law enforcement officers' high incidence of suicides and career abandonment is often attributed to work stress and inadequate support. The unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs further compound this situation. The researcher addressed the problem of unmet needs by training local pastors to serve as chaplains. Seven deputies, including six males and one female, and ten ministers, including eight males and two females, participated in the program. The training sessions included the following topics: introduction to law enforcement chaplaincy, personal issues LEOs' battle, ministry of presence, building relationships, the chaplain's purpose and role, qualities desired in a chaplain, ride-alongs, death notifications, and an overview of the different divisions within the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. The researcher identified several recurring themes by conducting interviews with deputies and chaplains. According to the interviewees, factors such as serving, work stressors, trust, and relationships significantly determine the presence or absence of a positive career attitude. By implementing a chaplaincy ministry, chaplains built trusting relationships and began meeting the unmet needs of deputies. Other law enforcement agencies will be able to follow this study to address their personnel's unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs, which will help foster a healthy working environment.

Keywords: Cullman County Sheriff's Office, Ministry of Presence, Relationships, Trust, Deputies, Law Enforcement Chaplains

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I dedicate this research project to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the One who gave me a heart for ministering to law enforcement personnel. Without Him, I would not have been able to accomplish such a task. Also, I would like to thank my wife, Julie, for continually supporting me through this rigorous process. I am thankful for how often she helped me process and write out my thoughts. She is the love of my life, and I could not imagine life without her. I thank my sons, Spencer and Skyler, for supporting this endeavor and bringing Julie and me such great joy. We are proud of the young men of God they are. Next, I would like to thank my parents, Bill and Karen Smith, for their unconditional love and unwavering support since childhood. When my Dad sensed I was discouraged, he always reminded me, "It will be worth it in the end." I appreciate my Mom for her many prayers and encouragement. Now that I am finished, it will be strange not to call her and say, "I just submitted another assignment." I am grateful for my mother-in-law, Carole Birchfield, who cheered me along the way and understood when I had to stay behind at her beach house to read and write instead of enjoying family time while on vacation.

I also thank Sheriff Matt Gentry for asking me to serve as the Cullman County Sheriff's Office Lead Chaplain and assigning me to develop a chaplaincy ministry that other agencies would desire to emulate. Additionally, I want to thank the rest of the CCSO, especially those who participated in this research endeavor. Without their assistance, this project would not have been possible. I am also grateful to our chaplains for recognizing and faithfully meeting the need to minister to deputies and the entire sheriff's office. These individuals are steadfast in their dedication and always go above and beyond. I am grateful for Captain Ed Potter, Ph.D., who unofficially served as my field mentor and encouraged me throughout my research. I am also forever thankful for Lieutenant Rebekah Cash, who helped me countless times with formatting issues and made the graphs in this project possible. I do not know what I would have done without her. She was a tremendous help; the CCSO is blessed to have her.

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Contents

Illustrations	ix
Abbreviations	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Ministry Context	3
Problem Presented	10
Purpose Statement	11
Basic Assumptions	12
Definitions	13
Limitations	14
Delimitations	15
Thesis Statement	16
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	18
Literature Review	18
Work Stressors.....	19
The Chaplain’s Response to Helping Others Deal with Stress	21
Alcoholism	22
The Chaplain’s Response to Helping Others Overcome Alcohol	23
Suicide	24
The Chaplain’s Response to Suicide	25
Requirements and Expectations of Chaplains	26
Theological Foundations	30
Old Testament Foundation for Chaplaincy Ministry.....	31
New Testament Foundation for Chaplaincy Ministry	33
Following Biblical Examples of Chaplaincy by Applying God’s Word.....	37
Theoretical Foundation	40
Lay Leader Lead Chaplaincy Ministries	40
Led by Experienced and Equipped Local Pastors	43
The Ideal Chaplaincy Model	44
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	48
Intervention Design	48
Intervention Timeline	49
IRB Approval and Permissions	50
Recruitment of Participants	50
<i>Alabama Law Enforcement Chaplain Leaders</i>	50
<i>Prospective Chaplains</i>	51
<i>Deputies</i>	52
<i>Focus Group</i>	53
Pre-Training Interviews with Participants.....	54
<i>Chaplain Leaders</i>	54
<i>Prospective Chaplains</i>	56
<i>Deputies</i>	57
<i>Focus Group</i>	57

Curriculum Development and Training Sessions for Prospective Chaplains	57
Curriculum Development	58
One-Day Chaplaincy Training	59
Post-Training Interviews with Participants	59
<i>Prospective Chaplains</i>	60
<i>Deputies</i>	62
<i>Focus Group</i>	62
Data Analysis.....	62
Implementation of the Intervention Design	63
Approval and Chaplain Recruitment	63
Deputy Recruitment.....	64
Chaplain Pre-Training Interviews	64
Deputy Pre-Training Interviews	64
Chaplain Training	65
Chaplain Post-Training Interviews.....	66
Deputy Post-Training Interviews	66
Focus Group Post-Training Interview	67
Data Analysis and Determine Themes	67
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	69
Theme 1: Serving	71
Serving: Deputy’s Perspective	71
Serving: Chaplain’s Perspective.....	76
Theme 2: Stressors	79
Stressors: Deputy’s Perspective	80
Stressors: Chaplain’s Perspective.....	86
Theme 3: Trust	92
Trust: Deputy’s Perspective	92
Trust: Chaplain’s Perspective.....	97
Theme 4: Relationships	101
Relationships: Deputies Perspective.....	102
Relationships: Chaplains Perspective.....	104
Strategies for Developing Relationships	106
Summary of Results	108
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	110
Research Implications	110
Research Applications	111
Further Ordained Chaplain Recruitment	112
Continual Chaplaincy Training	113
Summary.....	115
Research Limitations	116
Further Research	116
Female Chaplain Recruitment	117
Vicarious Trauma	118
Conclusion	121

Bibliography	122
Appendix A	131
Appendix B.....	132
Appendix C.....	133
Appendix D	134
Appendix E.....	137
Appendix F	138
Appendix G	139
Appendix H	142
Appendix I.....	143
Appendix J.....	144
Appendix K	147
Appendix L.....	148
Appendix M.....	149
Appendix N	150
Appendix O	153
Appendix P	154
Appendix Q	155
Appendix R.....	165
Appendix S.....	166
Appendix T.....	167
Appendix U	169
Appendix V	170
IRB Approval Letter.....	171

Illustrations

Figure 1. Job stress factors	91
Figure 2. Retirement plans	91
Figure 3. Seeking confidential advice	100
Figure 4. Seeking prayer.....	101
Figure 5. Care of employees.....	107
Figure 6. Consoling presence	107
Figure 7. Personal ministry.....	108

Abbreviations

CCMA	<i>Cullman County Ministerial Alliance</i>
CCSO	<i>Cullman County Sheriff's Office</i>
ICPC	<i>International Conference of Police Chaplains</i>
LEOs	<i>Law Enforcement Officers</i>
PC	<i>Prospective Chaplain</i>
PD	<i>Police Department</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement is a critical sector of society tasked with safeguarding communities. Officers have several essential responsibilities, including preventing crime, protecting the public, investigating crimes, and apprehending lawbreakers. In addition, they respond to various situations and emergencies, following specific guidelines and protocols. Officers also collect and record evidence so cases can be successfully prosecuted in court. Unfortunately, all these tasks contribute to high levels of workplace stress.¹

As a result, chaplains have an overwhelming need to serve in the law enforcement community. Unfortunately, law enforcement workers often feel alone, and their service goes unnoticed. These emotions frequently leave officers feeling unwanted and unappreciated. Many do not know how to process these thoughts and allow them to cause profound implications. Too often, officers attempt to gloss over these issues by pretending that their problems do not exist. However, this coping method is seldom successful and frequently leads to stress, depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, or suicide. Studies reveal that those who do not handle stress correctly often do so because they lack social support.² For this reason, every law enforcement agency should consider establishing a support system through a chaplaincy ministry within their department.

The Latin word *cappa*, which means “hooded cloak or cape,” is the origin of the term chaplain. The title chaplain stems from the fabled generosity of a fourth-century Roman

¹ Vijay Viegas, and Joslyn Henriques, “Job Stress and Work-Family Conflict as Correlates of Job Satisfaction among Police Officials,” *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 36, no. 2 (2020;2021): 230.

² Manish Omprakash Awasthi and Mahek Iram Qureshi, “Management of Stress and Coping Behavior—A Psychological Analysis Study of Stressed Police Force,” *BVIMSR’s Journal of Management Research* 13, no. 1 (04, 2021): 1–5.

centurion named Martin de Tour, credited with using his military cape to rescue impoverished beggars who were war casualties.³ Today, many chaplains volunteer to help address the needs of those hurting physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Just as the military chaplain ministers alongside soldiers during wars, the law enforcement chaplain assists officers in fighting street wars each day.

Sheriff Matt Gentry and the Cullman County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) in Cullman, Alabama, seek to create a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. The sheriff recognizes the need to recruit and train local clergy to serve in this capacity. As a result, he has assigned the researcher to identify potential avenues for developing such a ministry. This chapter discusses the CCSO chaplaincy ministry and the context in which it operates. In addition, it presents the central problem, the purpose behind this project, and the thesis. Also included in this chapter are the researcher's basic assumptions, simple definitions of terms often only recognized by law enforcement, and the project's limitations and delimitations. All this information helps demonstrate the necessity for a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO.

³ Lindsay B. Carey, Timothy J. Hodgson, Lillian Krikheli, Rachel Y. Soh, Annie-Rose Armour, Taranjeet K. Singh, and Cassandra G. Impiombato, "Moral Injury, Spiritual Care and the Role of Chaplains: An Exploratory Scoping Review of Literature and Resources," *Journal of Religion and Health* 55, no. 4 (2016): 1221.

Ministry Context

The CCSO is in the state's north-central region in Cullman, Alabama. Cullman County is between Birmingham and Huntsville and intersects with Interstate 65. This beautiful and convenient location promotes a healthy economy from lucrative businesses, and a variety of successful industrial development comprised "of more than 150 companies."⁴ This county boasts several people who have become famous through fashion design, music, acting, politics, and professional sports. Some of the most famous include Channing Tatum, Melinda Dillon, Holly Williams, Charles Kleibacker, JoJo Billingsley, Josh Rutledge, Zeb Little, and Wesley Britt.⁵

The last census in 2020 revealed the population of Cullman County was 87,866.⁶ At that time, it was found that in Cullman County, Alabama, the five main ethnic groups were White (Non-Hispanic) (91.9 percent), White (Hispanic) (3.23 percent), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (1.79 percent), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (1.25 percent), and Other (Hispanic) (0.844 percent).⁷

As a result of any growing community, law and order must be established. Therefore, the Cullman County Sheriff's Office began in 1877 with John W. Tomlinson serving as the first sheriff.⁸ Cullman County continues to have its share of crime. In 2023, CCSO deputies made 3,542 arrests, down by 544 from the previous year.⁹ During this past year, they responded to 55

⁴ North Alabama Industrial Development Association, Cullman County, accessed February 24, 2024, naida.com/our-region/cullman-county.

⁵ Famous Fix, *People from Cullman*, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.famousfix.com/list/people-from-cullman-alabama>.

⁶ "QuickFacts Cullman County, AL," *United States Census Bureau*, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cullmancountyalabama/PST045223>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Alabama Sheriff's Association, *Cullman County Sheriff's History*, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.alabamasheriffs.com/cullman-county>.

⁹ Rebekah Cash, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, February 26, 2024.

assaults, 21 child abuse cases, 1,308 crashes, 30 dead bodies, 39 sex offenses, 783 domestic calls, 66 suicide attempts, and 5 traumatic injuries.¹⁰ However, family, faith, and finance have flourished in this growing community. In Cullman County, various Catholic and Protestant churches of all denominations are plentiful. It has an impressive selection of churches representing multiple denominations and faiths that have been around for many years.¹¹

Not only is there a church on nearly every city block and around each country curve, but there is also a monastery and convent in Cullman County that is over 100 years old.¹² Along with other denominations within the county, 104 Southern Baptist churches exist.¹³ Even though the researcher is Southern Baptist, he will intentionally recruit chaplains, ensuring that all mainstream denominations are represented within the chaplaincy ministry. He understands the importance of this ministry, reflecting the denominations represented among those who work for the sheriff's office. With many churches spanning all mainstream denominations, securing local pastors to serve as chaplains should not be an issue.

In 1995, J. Tyler Roden, the son of former Cullman County Sheriff Wendell Roden (1979–1991), defeated David Laney, who served one term as sheriff. Within his first term, Sheriff Roden began to see the need to establish a chaplaincy ministry. He ran ads in the local paper and “The Community Shoppers Guide” for three weeks. Seven local pastors responded to the ad. They later met with the sheriff at his office to discuss the possibility of developing a volunteer chaplaincy ministry for the CCSO. As a result, six agreed to serve and began

¹⁰ Rebekah Cash, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, February 26, 2024.

¹¹ Best Places, *Cullman, AL Religion*, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://bestplaces.net/religion/city/alabama/cullman>.

¹² St. Bernard Abbey, *About Us*, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.stbernardabbey.com>.

¹³ East Cullman Baptist Association, *75th Anniversary*, accessed February 15, 2022, <https://www.ecba316.org/75th-anniversary>.

volunteering their time when called.¹⁴ While the chaplaincy ministry operated for nearly 15 years, it lacked organizational structure and was discontinued when Roden's successor took office.

Mike Rainey defeated Cullman County's four-term sheriff, Tyler Roden, in November 2010. Rainey's campaign message of making Cullman County a safer place to live resonated with the citizens of Cullman County, and he took office in January 2011. He vowed to use his experience with the Alabama Drug Task Force to fight the drug problem in the county and his personal business experience to manage county finances. However, Sheriff Rainey did not prioritize the chaplaincy ministry, which ceased in his first year of office.

In 2014, a former United States Marine and Cullman County District Attorney's Office drug enforcement investigator, Matt Gentry, announced his candidacy and ran against incumbent Sheriff Mike Rainey. Gentry also served as a former deputy of the CCSO under Tyler Roden and thoroughly understood the sheriff's office. After a brutally fought campaign, Gentry was elected the 30th Sheriff of Cullman County. Remembering the benefits of having a chaplaincy ministry under Tyler Roden's administration, Sheriff Gentry redeveloped it during his first term in office. Halfway through his first term, he contacted six former chaplains who served under Sheriff Roden and lived within the county. After meeting with Sheriff Gentry, all ministers, including those still serving in local churches and those retired, agreed to serve as chaplains again.¹⁵

The chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO was reinstated, yet it still lacked organization and began to lose chaplains for various reasons. One of the chaplains who served as a Catholic priest was reassigned to a new parish. Two of the retired Baptist pastors' health declined, making it

¹⁴ Tyler Roden, interview by researcher, City of Hanceville, October 18, 2021.

¹⁵ Matt Gentry, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, October 21, 2021.

impossible for them to assist. Still, with the sheriff's office, the other Catholic priest started to battle health issues and later died. This left only three active chaplains: two Baptist chaplains and one Presbyterian. One of the remaining Baptists was soon unable to serve due to his wife's failing health. The Presbyterian chaplain began dealing with diabetic neuropathy and had to step down from his position. The only active chaplain left was the researcher.

In the summer of 2020, Sheriff Gentry realized that the sheriff's office's chaplaincy ministry needed a clear direction and leader. He assigned the researcher as the Lead Chaplain and instructed him to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. The sheriff specified that a list of requirements and expectations be created for prospective chaplains and that training be mandated for all incoming chaplains. He also recommended that the researcher contact various sheriff's offices in Alabama with chaplaincy ministries to learn how they operate. In addition, he offered to provide chaplaincy training to the researcher through the International Conference of Police Chaplains. To better equip the researcher to complete such a task, he enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry chaplain cognate at Liberty University in the Fall of 2020.

Initiating a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO will be a tremendous task. The sheriff's office is comprised of sworn and non-sworn employees. Individuals who are sworn have completed the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (APOSTC) requirements at one of the approved police academies in Alabama. Unless they transfer from another agency, all CCSO sworn deputies graduate from the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center in Selma or the Northeast Alabama Law Enforcement Academy on Anniston's Jacksonville State University campus. This training lasts twelve weeks, and candidates undergo a rigorous training regimen. "Academy training consists of 480 hours of

basic training. All the candidate's scores should be 70% or higher, the candidate must pass the physical fitness test, and they must pass a total of 43 hours of firearms training."¹⁶

The CCSO is comprised of seven divisions and is under the supervision of the command staff. Sheriff Matt Gentry leads the command staff and every division within the sheriff's office. Next in command is Chief Deputy Brett Holmes, followed by Major Matt Hogue, Patrol Captain Ricky Blackwood, Investigations Captain Phillip Harris, Victim Services Captain Ed Potter, Detention Center Warden Captain Kelley Allen, and Chief Clerk Delitha Poag. These individuals preside over every department and employee, both sworn and unsworn. They are the backbone of the CCSO.¹⁷

The first division is patrol, the largest within the sheriff's office. Captain Ricky Blackwood leads this division. Patrol comprises seven lieutenants, three sergeants, 29 deputies, and twelve reserve deputies. These deputies help make up four shifts that work a minimum of twelve hours daily. Some shifts work from 4 a.m. until 4 p.m., while others work from 4 p.m. until 4 a.m. Those working Monday and Tuesday are off on Wednesday and Thursday. After having two days off, deputies work Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. However, once a weekend is served, the rotation system gives deputies off the following Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Then, the rotation repeats itself. While working, deputies are responsible for responding to calls and patrolling the county roads. The county roads in Cullman County consist of 755 square miles.¹⁸

The second division is school resource deputies, led by Lieutenant Doug Duke. This division is assigned to the twenty-eight Cullman County School System schools. These schools

¹⁶ Security Guard Training Central, "How to Become a Police Officer in Alabama," accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.securityguardtrainingcentral.com/how-to-become-a-police-officer-in-alabama>.

¹⁷ Matt Gentry, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, October 21, 2021.

¹⁸ Ibid.

are divided among the three lieutenants, four sergeants, and six deputies. Many of these deputies are reassigned to other duties during the summer months. Therefore, most school resource deputies will assist the patrol division when school is not in session.¹⁹

The third division is investigations. Captain Phillip Harris leads this department. Under Captain Harris are one lieutenant, eleven investigators, and one civilian employee. These individuals work Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. unless on call. The investigators within this department are responsible for investigating crimes committed inside the county. In addition, they are accountable for performing follow-up investigations on all minor and felony offenses. Most of their investigations cover robberies, burglaries, domestic abuse, and aggravated assaults.²⁰

The fourth division is courthouse security, and Sergeant Jacob Gable supervises this group. In addition, four other deputies serve within the courthouse. These men and women are responsible for providing safety to everyone in the building. For example, each person who enters the courthouse must pass through a metal detector manned by two deputies. Additionally, two deputies are assigned duty in the courtroom during trials to help maintain order.

Dispatch is the fifth division. Amber Smith, the supervisor, leads this unit, consisting of four shift supervisors and eight dispatchers. Dispatchers follow the same working rotation as the patrol division. This group serves as a vital link between the citizens of Cullman County and the deputies on the road twenty-four hours, seven days a week. They are multitaskers and are the first ones to respond to emergency calls. Dispatchers ensure the correct personnel are dispatched to emergency and non-emergency calls. Failure to handle calls properly is dangerous to deputies

¹⁹ Brett Holmes, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, October 21, 2021.

²⁰ Ibid.

and can be life-threatening to those requesting help. Dispatchers receive calls for loud music, domestic conflicts, property disputes, and burglaries. While they are responsible for notifying deputies of emergency and non-emergency calls, they also help those calling remain calm until assistance arrives. They often “Provide life-saving instructions over the phone while simultaneously dispatching field responders, or they may be the last individual to speak with an injured individual who, despite their best efforts, they were unable to save.”²¹

The sixth division within the CCSO is the administrative division, which has nineteen members. Chief Clerk Delitha Poag is the supervisor for this group. Most of the nineteen individuals in this unit are unsworn employees. They oversee the sheriff’s office finances, technology, records, pistol permits, and other essential elements. Unless assigned special events in the community, this group works Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.²²

The final division is victim services under Captain Ed Potter’s direction. This division offers a diverse range of services and resources for individuals who have been victimized by crime. Also, victim services are a problem solver and social change agent for our community that helps to provide information on various topics such as criminal procedures, mental health issues, and homelessness. The victim services captain works with other community partners, nonprofits, and government agencies to help individuals and families receive complete services and care provided in Cullman County.

Sheriff Gentry understands that one chaplain cannot effectively minister to each of these divisions and that multiple chaplains will be required since his office employs 180 individuals.

²¹ Michelle Lilly et al., “Destress 9-1-1—an Online Mindfulness-Based Intervention in Reducing Stress among Emergency Medical Dispatchers: A Randomised Controlled Trial,” *Occupational and Environmental Medicine (London, England)* 76, no. 10 (2019): 705.

²² Matt Hogue, interview by researcher, City of Cullman, October 21, 2021.

That is why he has entrusted this researcher with the responsibility to create a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. Soon, the researcher hopes to begin defining the qualifications and expectations for prospective chaplains. Additionally, he desires to develop a training curriculum to equip those who serve adequately. Prayerfully, the material designed for this task will create a chaplaincy ministry that ministers to all divisions and remains strong even as chaplains change.

Problem Presented

The problem is that deputies' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs are unmet because the CCSO lacks a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. According to research, many law enforcement members battle emotional issues.²³ These issues develop when one goes through a traumatic event and can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder when a support system is not present within a department. Others suffer from physical concerns such as high blood pressure and gastrointestinal and cardiovascular diseases.²⁴ In addition, some law enforcement personnel lack a solid biblical foundation to help them cope with the various daily issues.²⁵ It is believed that a chaplaincy ministry that equips local pastors to serve as chaplains could help assist with many of the problems that have been mentioned.

According to research, law enforcement is one of the most stressful jobs.²⁶ Officers are frequently confronted with circumstances that have a cascading effect on their emotional well-

²³ Garry B. Hall et al., Work-Family Conflict, and Emotional Exhaustion in Police Officers: A Longitudinal Test of Competing Theories," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 83, no. 1 (2010): 240.

²⁴ Maran Acquadro, Daniela Massimo Zedda, and Antonella Varetto, "Physical Practice and Wellness Courses Reduce Distress and Improve Wellbeing in Police Officers," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15, no. 4 (2018): 578.

²⁵ Vertika Singh, and P. C. Mishra, "Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Life Satisfaction in Police Personnel in Uttar Pradesh," *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing* 4, no. 3 (03, 2013): 480.

²⁶ Kim S. Ménard and Michael L. Arter, "Police Officer Alcohol use and Trauma Symptoms: Associations with Critical Incidents, Coping, and Social Stressors," *International Journal of Stress Management* 20, no. 1 (2013): 40.

being. Experiencing death is a common occurrence. Unfortunately, sometimes, death experiences involve children. These circumstances are more challenging to handle because officers recognize that the child killed by a drunk driver could have been theirs.

When officers are confronted with death, they frequently feel unable to express their emotions. Some are concerned that being too transparent will make them appear weak in the eyes of others. As a result, they often turn to alcohol to cope with traumatic experiences. Regrettably, this way of coping serves to mask the officer's emotions. While a chaplaincy ministry cannot resolve all problems, it is believed that such a ministry can be a blessing to those who are struggling with work-related experiences.

Purpose Statement

This DMIN action research project aims to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry to support all CCSO personnel. Far too often, when a chaplaincy ministry is present within a law enforcement agency, the patrol division gets most of the attention. Sometimes, this is because they are more accessible than others. It is easier for a chaplain to ride with a patrol deputy than an investigator or narcotics deputy. However, chaplains must be creative in searching for ways to minister to these individuals. In a Sheriff's Office, a chaplain rarely ministers to those who work in the jail. Although much time may be spent ministering to inmates, deputies working in the corrections division are often overlooked. However, these negative trends can be corrected if a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed within a department.

A chaplaincy ministry focused on the needs of the sheriff's office's divisions is critical. Each of these seven departments is distinct and brings a unique perspective to law enforcement. For example, while the investigations division differs from the patrol unit, many of the exact needs are present. They, too, deal with death, but from a different angle. Typically, they respond

to homicides, the act of someone taking another person's life. Seeing a dead body can cause emotional distress when investigating crime scenes. However, a present chaplain at such a scene can significantly comfort bereaved investigators and bring comfort to victims of crimes.²⁷

Chaplains need to receive training on how to minister in crises. When properly trained, chaplains can help meet the needs of struggling officers. Therefore, one of the primary goals of developing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO will be to train all recruited chaplains adequately on various issues confronting law enforcement.

Basic Assumptions

A comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO can positively impact the lives of sworn and non-sworn employees. Law enforcement personnel can better perform their jobs if local pastors are recruited and trained to serve as chaplains. Law enforcement is highly stressful, and many officers are unsure how to handle these stresses. Consequently, many serve short-term careers and find employment in another field. It is believed that a well-established chaplaincy ministry could potentially change this paradigm.

The researcher intends to interview chaplaincy coordinators at several law enforcement agencies in Alabama to equip himself further to establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. During these interviews, the researcher will ask coordinators many questions that he believes are necessary to assist him with his thesis project. The researcher assumes that the questions will be answered truthfully to provide an accurate picture of what a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry entails. Written inquiries may be presented to the deputies of Cullman County Sheriff's Office,

²⁷ Valerie Gouse, "An Investigation of an Expanded Police Chaplaincy Model: Police Chaplains' Communications with Local Citizens in Crisis," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 70, no. 3 (2016): 196.

understanding that their responses will remain anonymous. When individuals are given this option, their answers are believed to be more truthful.

The researcher believes that a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry will help address many of the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the CCSO personnel. He also assumes that recruiting chaplains to serve at the sheriff's office will not be too difficult since numerous churches exist in the county. According to the sheriff, a chaplain ministry of the different denominations represented within the CCSO will positively impact his office.

Definitions

Blue wall. The *blue wall* is “The invisible social and psychological barrier that separates police officers from others.”²⁸ While this wall is not a physical structure, it will prevent the chaplain from ministering to the law enforcement officer if it remains in place. Breaching this wall takes time and must be a priority for any chaplain desiring to minister to deputies. One of the best ways to conquer this obstacle is to be present and intentional about building trusting relationships. Furthermore, a chaplain's authenticity is required. Law enforcement officers deal with phony people daily and are typically good judges of character. The blue wall will remain if the chaplain gives any reason for officers to suspect them of being insincere. Getting access behind this barrier is worthwhile since it is only then that genuine ministry can occur.

Ride-along. The term “ride-along” is when a chaplain, perspective chaplain, or other approved individual rides in the passenger seat of an officer's vehicle during an officer's shift²⁹ This is one of the most effective ways for a chaplain to understand better what law enforcement

²⁸ Robert L. Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy* (Niagara Falls, Ontario: Aristotle Media Inc., 2011), 33.

²⁹ John L. Cross, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2017), 103.

officers experience daily. It is also an excellent experience that develops trust through personal relationships with officers. Most chaplains' ministry opportunities with law enforcement personnel occur during a ride-along. Although some officers dislike having civilians accompany them on their shift, many enjoy the company.³⁰

International Conference of Police Chaplains. The "International Conference of Police Chaplains" (ICPC) is a unique nonprofit group that provides "training, various courses, and general help with chaplain programs."³¹ This organization was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1973 and now is located in Destin, FL. Each year, they offer conferences in various locations throughout the United States. At these conferences, chaplains can choose between a wide assortment of breakout sessions to help better equip them to serve effectively. Many law enforcement agencies require chaplains to complete the basic training ICPC offers before serving within their agency.

Limitations

Throughout the process of developing his prospectus and thesis, the researcher anticipates dealing with limitations that are beyond his control. One identified limitation is the limited amount of printed material published in the last ten years that addresses developing comprehensive chaplaincy ministries within law enforcement agencies. While much research supports the need for such a ministry, resources discussing how-to are lacking. Although sources are not widely accessible, the researcher hopes to use the library at Jacksonville State University,

³⁰ Anita L. Bright, "Privilege in a Police Car: The story of my Unresolved Ride-Along," *The Qualitative Report* 20, no. 5 (May 04, 2015): 541–56, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fpriiledge-police-car-story-my-unresolved-ride%2Fdocview%2F1687810016%2Fse-2>.

³¹ Terry Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role: How Clergy Can Work with Law Enforcement* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012), 172.

located eighty miles from his hometown. This school is well-known for its criminal justice program and should have resources to benefit the researcher's thesis.

Another limitation that presents itself is the study's sample size. While there are numerous hospital chaplains in Alabama's north-central region, law enforcement chaplains are more challenging to locate. Therefore, even though the researcher will be limited to the number of law enforcement chaplains he can interview, there is still much to be learned from those actively serving in various departments. However, finding individuals serving in well-established comprehensive chaplaincy ministries may be an enormous task due to their scarcity and time restraints.

The researcher may discover that the chaplains he interviewed were not always honest with their answers through qualitative research methods. This is frequently the case when the interviewed person has a professional relationship with the research chaplain. Rather than sharing the struggles inherent in law enforcement chaplaincy, the interviewee may focus exclusively on the positive. Sometimes, chaplains may feel that it reflects their capabilities if something is imperfect. These roadblocks inevitably result in limitations but are part of the research process.

Delimitations

The researcher is the senior pastor at East Side Baptist Church in Cullman, Alabama. Although developing a more robust chaplaincy ministry within his church would be helpful, this prospectus will focus on creating a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO in Cullman, Alabama. The researcher has served in law enforcement since 2006. Therefore, he understands the need for and the benefit of law enforcement chaplaincy.

While the researcher continues to investigate how to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry, he will focus exclusively on studying material related to law enforcement. While there is much to learn from other chaplaincy ministries, like fire and EMS, time does not allow for study in these areas. As a result, the researcher will not conduct interviews or analyses on other first responder chaplaincy ministries unrelated to his calling. Keeping his research specific will be difficult but necessary in completing this project.

The researcher's methodology will be constrained because he will interview only chaplains presently serving law enforcement agencies. The researcher believes that those who have retired from this line of ministry may impart wisdom, but due to time constraints, he must be selective in how he spends his time. Additionally, he will not conduct interviews with chaplains who are not serving in Alabama. Recently, the researcher identified two law enforcement agencies in northern Alabama and one in southwest Alabama that he could study. Establishing these parameters will help the researcher remain focused and expedite his research.

Thesis Statement

If a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed within the CCSO, many of the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of deputies can be addressed. It is exciting to think about the positive difference a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry can make when implemented. As already noted, many emotional, physical, and spiritual needs are not being addressed due to a lack of chaplains in law enforcement circles. However, many chaplains have graduate degrees and have been trained to meet these issues.³² Others have taken chaplaincy training courses and

³² John L. Cross, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2017), Kindle, loc. 73.

can minister to those in need. Additionally, if recruited, local pastors can be trained to help address the needs of law enforcement officers.

Numerous issues that deputies encounter could be resolved with the assistance of a chaplaincy ministry. Too often, needs go unmet due to the lack of active chaplains ministering. Caring chaplains could address a majority of the needs present.³³ A simple pat on the back or prayer means a lot to a deputy experiencing emotional or spiritual distress.

The researcher is challenged and encouraged by the prospect of establishing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO. He intends to interview chaplains in other law enforcement agencies to aid in this process. There is much to be gained from the chaplaincy ministries of different departments. The thought of implementing tried-and-true strategies is exciting. Although this task will not be easy, the researcher is committed to developing a chaplaincy ministry that others want to be a part of and emulate within their agency.

³³ Terry Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role: How Clergy Can Work with Law Enforcement* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012), 133.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The job of a law enforcement officer never stops, and many officers take their daily stresses home. Regrettably, this action often results in the officer's spouse and children experiencing these same stressors, resulting in a divided family due to divorce and a law enforcement officer's short career.¹ However, some manage their work-related stress with the assistance of well-being classes and chaplains. This study gives evidence of the need for law enforcement chaplaincy. A well-developed comprehensive chaplaincy ministry can help address law enforcement personnel's emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. In this chapter, the researcher will review the various career struggles in law enforcement.

Literature Review

Much has been written about law enforcement's stressful battles while serving in their respected vocations. However, there is a lack of academic literature regarding how law enforcement chaplains can respond to these issues. There is also a lack of literature on the necessity of chaplaincy ministries and developing one. Upon studying many sources, the researcher identified various critical themes pertinent to justifying law enforcement chaplaincy. These themes include but are not limited to stress, alcoholism, suicide, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

¹ Robert L. Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy* (Niagara Falls, Ontario: Aristotle Media Inc., 2011), 20.

Work Stressors

Law enforcement personnel experience stress that few other careers can match.

Numerous experts agree that it is one of the most stressful jobs, and not everyone should pursue it.² There are multiple reasons for the high stress rate in this dangerous career. These include public harassment, the meticulous details required when filling out arrest and accident reports, court appearances on off days, criminal release by the court system, and a lack of support from department supervisors.³ In addition, many officers experience stress due to their inability to compartmentalize their job and personal lives. Their department lacks a support system for dealing with emotional and mental health issues, which makes matters worse. As a result, each law enforcement agency should implement treatment and preventative plans to reduce stress-related disorders.⁴ Departments that have such systems, as well as individuals who participate in wellness classes, will benefit.

Stress results in havoc in the home and can hurt one's job performance and health. Much has been written on the detrimental effects of unaddressed stress on an individual. If left unchecked, stress may cause officers to give partial attention to their work.⁵ This can endanger the officer, others they work with, and civilians they are called to serve and protect. Ignoring stress and failing to alleviate it can also have a negative physical effect on law enforcement officers. Police officers are prone to ailments such as insomnia, cardiovascular diseases, and

² Kim S. Ménard, and Michael L. Arter, "Police Officer Alcohol Use and Trauma Symptoms: Associations with Critical Incidents, Coping, and Social Stressors," *International Journal of Stress Management* 20, no. 1 (2013): 38.

³ Maran Acquadro, Daniela, Massimo Zedda, and Antonella Varetto, "Physical Practice and Wellness Courses Reduce Distress and Improve Wellbeing in Police Officers," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15, no. 4 (2018): 578.

⁴ Ménard, and Arter, "Police Officer Alcohol Use and Trauma Symptoms," 51.

⁵ Terry Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role: How Clergy Can Work with Law Enforcement* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012), 19.

digestive problems.⁶ If left untreated, these illnesses and difficulties can result in mortality. Unfortunately, many officers ignore some health issues caused by stress to avoid appearing weak or incapable of performing their duties. In addition, some disregard physical difficulties due to fear of not being promoted.

Other authors discuss how dispatchers are subjected to high stress levels and the potential side effects one may experience. In many ways, dispatchers are the initial responders to most life-threatening incidents encountered by emergency personnel.⁷ Therefore, they must be trained to manage stress effectively to perform their duties to the highest standards possible, as there is no room for mistakes. When dispersing emergency workers, each second counts. Despite the risks, many departments do not provide stress management training to their employees. Some emergency service call takers and dispatchers have stated that the absence of “high-quality training” increases stress levels, making emergency calls challenging to answer and prioritize.⁸ Failure to summon the appropriate first responders to a scene is dangerous for everyone involved and can have life-threatening implications. Dispatchers are responsible for monitoring the availability and movements of police and fire rescue units and providing them with the most current information on the emergency.⁹ Studies prove that dispatchers endure more elevated

⁶ Maran Acquadro, Daniela, Massimo Zedda, and Antonella Varetto, “Physical Practice and Wellness Courses Reduce Distress and Improve Wellbeing in Police Officers,” 578.

⁷ Bryan Steinkopf et al., “Assessment of Stress and Resiliency in Emergency Dispatchers,” *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 33, no. 4 (2018): 388.

⁸ Erin C. Smith, Lisa Holmes, and Frederick M. Burkle, “Exploring the Physical and Mental Health Challenges Associated with Emergency Service Call-Taking and Dispatching: A Review of the Literature,” *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 34, no. 6 (2019): 621.

⁹ Steinkopf, “Assessment of Stress and Resiliency in Emergency Dispatchers,” 388.

levels of peritraumatic distress than other professions, including police officers, due to their work. Women, on average, have more significant difficulties in this area than males.¹⁰

The Chaplain's Response to Helping Others Deal with Stress

The researcher agrees that stress has many adverse side effects; however, stress does not always negatively affect law enforcement officers' lives. A present and vigilant chaplain realizes this by witnessing how stress can motivate individuals to excel in their work. For example, a new sergeant will find that their workload has increased because of their latest promotion. A sensitive chaplain can use this as a teaching moment not to remove all stress from this overly worked sergeant's life but to help them channel it. This can be accomplished by reminding the police officer that God has elevated them to their new role (Matt. 25:23). A higher rank means greater responsibilities, influence, and better pay. In addition, the chaplain can pray with the sergeant to take advantage of this new opportunity to pour their lives into younger officers. Sometimes, those in higher ranks forget that there is much that new deputies can learn from their experience. As a result, they fail to redirect their stress so that optimistic views can come to light and be used as a motivator to help them excel as a supervisor. Stress can hinder law enforcement officers but can bring out the best in others and themselves when adequately channeled.¹¹

Chaplains are a source of encouragement to those within their sphere of influence. The researcher envisions providing workshops within the CCSO to help deputies and other staff members cope with stress. The researcher may teach these workshops or use outside experts to offer professional training. Currently, the researcher is learning the positive and negative results

¹⁰ Heather Pierce and Michelle M. Lilly, "Duty-Related Trauma Exposure in 911 Telecommunicators: Considering the Risk for Posttraumatic Stress," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 25, no. 2 (2012): 212.

¹¹ Firdaus S. Dhabhar, "The Power of Positive Stress-a Complementary Commentary," *Stress (Amsterdam, Netherlands)* 22, no. 5 (2019): 527.

stress brings to law enforcement. He had found that ignored stress can cause harm to many, yet when correctly addressed, it can result in good for everyone involved. Stress is an excellent resource for chaplains to remind law enforcement that life is bigger than them, but God is there to help them perform their jobs with excellence. Unfortunately, many law enforcement agencies lack chaplains to encourage officers, and some officers choose alcohol to help them cope.

Alcoholism

The abuse of alcohol remains a consistent problem for law enforcement officials.¹² While cops deal with alcohol abuse consistently and witness its adverse effects on those they arrest, officers also battle its overuse. Interestingly, Caucasian officers who reported feeling more worried and depressed were more prone to abuse alcohol than their non-white peers who reported feeling less anxious and depressed.¹³ Are Ménard and Arter suggesting that race plays a role in alcoholism or emphasizing the need to deal with anxiety and depression? Perhaps further research should be done by someone with more experience in this area. However, it should be safe to conclude that failure to address depression and anxiety may lead to excessive alcohol use regardless of one's race. Turning to excessive alcohol consumption to solve one's struggles is a "maladaptive coping" strategy.¹⁴ Maladaptive coping mechanisms such as alcohol are not only ineffective, but they can also add to one's existing physical and mental issues, causing one to entertain suicidal thoughts.

¹² Dominic G. Lucia and Michael J. Halloran, "An Investigation of the Efficacy of Programs to Prevent Stress in Law Enforcement Officers: A Program managers' Perspective," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 35, no. 1 (2019;2020): 38.

¹³ Ménard and Arter, "Police Officer Alcohol use and Trauma Symptoms: Associations with Critical Incidents, Coping, and Social Stressors," *International Journal of Stress Management* 20, no.1 (2013): 40.

¹⁴ Daniela, Zedda, and Varetto, "Physical Practice and Wellness Courses Reduce Distress and Improve Wellbeing in Police Officers," 578.

When police officers realize that they are relying too much upon alcohol to help them cope with their struggles at work, some will turn to chaplains. Chaplains can offer encouragement by praying for the officer struggling with this addiction and sharing Scripture. However, sometimes law enforcement officers need more help than what a chaplain has been trained to give. Therefore, a chaplain must be prepared to recommend substance misuse programs.¹⁵

The Chaplain's Response to Helping Others Overcome Alcohol

The researcher believes that evidence has shown that alcoholism is a severe issue among law enforcement personnel and needs to be addressed. Upon further research, it has also been discovered that alcoholism is a problem among the wives of police officers. According to psychologist Stephanie Conn, "secondary trauma" experienced by first responder wives is significantly associated with increased alcohol consumption.¹⁶ Unfortunately, many wives cannot cope with their husbands' experiences and turn to alcohol as a result. Counseling should not be limited to those working within law enforcement agencies but should also be offered to spouses who struggle with the same issues. Assuming both the officer and his wife battle excessive alcohol use, perhaps counseling could be conducted with them simultaneously. This approach would allow the couple to overcome stress levels and excessive alcohol use together. However, some may find that individual counseling may be more productive. The researcher has not found any studies that favor one form of counseling. Regardless of the counseling approach, chaplains should not ignore alcoholism among those they serve and be ready to assist the officer

¹⁵ Alan T. Baker, *Foundations of Chaplaincy: A Practical Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Press, 2021), 161.

¹⁶ Stephanie M. Conn, *Increasing Resilience in Police and Emergency Personnel: Strengthening Your Mental Armor* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 23.

and his wife personally or refer them to someone who can. Failure to address alcoholism and provide help for those battling this issue could lead to one taking their own life. Unfortunately, suicide and alcoholism go hand in hand. A person who commits suicide sometimes has an alcohol use disorder.¹⁷

Suicide

Suicide continues to be a significant concern in the law enforcement community. Officers are responding to civilian suicides and the suicides of those in their ranks. Suicide rates among law enforcement officers are incredibly high. This is frequently related to the high levels of stress they face within their job.¹⁸ According to statistics, someone attempts to kill themselves with conscious intent once every minute. These attempts are successful sixty to seventy times a day on average. It is estimated that between twenty-two and twenty-five thousand people commit suicide each year in the United States, or one suicide every twenty-six minutes on average.¹⁹ Although Perkins does not specify how many of these attempted or committed suicides are related to law enforcement personnel, the number is likely high. A poll found that nearly half of the five hundred seventy-five police officers who participated in it (260, or 46.2 percent) knew of another officer who had taken their life.²⁰ Also, of those surveyed, more than one in ten police officers acknowledged having suicidal thoughts.²¹

¹⁷ Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy*, 149.

¹⁸ Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role: How Clergy Can Work with Law Enforcement*, 152.

¹⁹ Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy*, 103.

²⁰ Matthew H. Fleischmann et al., "Law Enforcement Officers' Perceptions of and Responses to Traumatic Events: A Survey of Officers Completing Crisis Intervention Team Training," *Policing & Society* 28, no. 2 (2018): 152.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Why are large numbers of police officers contemplating and or following through with suicide? Some believe that the culprit is post-traumatic stress disorder, otherwise known as PTSD. Post-traumatic stress disorder is the most frequently used diagnosis by mental health professionals for those who have experienced significant trauma in their lives and have developed specific symptoms due to that event.²² As a result of PTSD, many working within law enforcement personnel battle with various issues. Insomnia, nightmares, intense flashbacks of the incident, anger, anxiety attacks, concentration troubles, and avoidance of persons or places that trigger memories of the experience are just a few symptoms of PTSD.²³ When officers fail to deal with these issues, suicidal thoughts cloud their minds, and many end up taking their lives. As a result, suicide within the ranks of law enforcement is receiving increased attention. The question of how the entities that employ these individuals might avoid such tragic deaths is being addressed.²⁴ Some departments are answering this question by enlisting the assistance of peers and chaplains in identifying persons of high suicidal risk.²⁵

The Chaplain's Response to Suicide

Chaplains must be proactive in helping lower the suicide rate within law enforcement. Karen Mason, who serves at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary as associate professor of counseling and psychology, believes that chaplains can help individuals strengthen their reasons for living. This is accomplished by providing a sense of belonging and service, teaching them to

²² Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy*, 64.

²³ Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role: How Clergy Can Work with Law Enforcement*, 44.

²⁴ Rajeev Ramchand et al., "Suicide Prevention in U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies: A National Survey of Current Practices," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* (2018): 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

establish healthy identities and self-esteem based on God's eternal love.²⁶ The researcher is blessed to serve with a sheriff who is also a follower of Christ and supports the chaplain teaching God's Word. Therefore, he will begin to use his Monday morning devotion given during the command staff meeting to remind everyone that God has a specific plan and purpose for everyone's life, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).²⁷ As the command staff sees God's value in their lives, we hope they will share that with those under their leadership. In addition, other local pastors will be recruited to serve as chaplains soon. Everyone has different gifts, and a wealth of giftedness has yet to be tapped into among our local pastors.

To bring further attention to suicide among law enforcement personnel, the researcher would like to bring in trained professionals to provide suicide prevention training. This training will be available to supervisors and chaplains once this ministry is established. It is believed that greater awareness of suicide can help lower the rates of officers taking their lives.

Requirements and Expectations of Chaplains

The law enforcement chaplain's role is essential and should not be taken lightly. Because of their great need and responsibilities, many departments place strict requirements and expectations upon these individuals. Police chaplains are often ordained pastors who have studied biblical studies in college. The majority have continued their education by earning a graduate degree.²⁸ Departments that utilize these servants understand the tremendous asset they

²⁶ Karen Mason, *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 39.

²⁷ All Scripture references unless otherwise noted are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

²⁸ John L. Cross, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2017), Kindle, location 73.

are when chosen wisely. As a result, chaplains are often subjected to a thorough background check by their department and required to have substantial ministry experience.²⁹ In addition to ministry experience, some agencies expect chaplains to participate in further training. This training can be conducted in-house for departments with these available resources, or chaplains may attend training conferences offsite. The International Conference of Police Chaplains in Destin, Florida, offers training on multiple levels. Many law enforcement departments require chaplains to pass the ICPC's "basic level (12-part course) curriculum" and be taught the procedures and policies of their local agency.³⁰ Others require chaplains to receive specialized training to combat issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder. This is partly because most police personnel are unprepared to deal with this problem, so a trained chaplain can be invaluable. A qualified, experienced chaplain provides a valuable service to the public and law enforcement personnel.³¹ Chaplains' extensive usefulness is globally recognized because they are often "multi-competent professionals with diverse skills."³²

Not all departments mandate that their chaplains be trained and allow individuals to serve regardless of experience or training. According to a study conducted in 2017 by the Association for Professional Chaplains, less than 15 percent of chaplains received training in chaplaincy at a theological institution. The skill set of those who complete such training compared to those who

²⁹ Ross Wolf, and Thomas Bryer, "Applying an Outcomes-Based Categorization to Non-Warranted/Non-Sworn Volunteers in United States Policing," *The Police Journal* 93, no. 1 (March 2020): 43.

³⁰ Valerie Gouse, "An Investigation of an Expanded Police Chaplaincy Model: Police Chaplains' Communications with Local Citizens in Crisis," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 70, no. 3 (2016): 197.

³¹ Thomas W. Shane, *Crisis Pastoral Care: A Police Chaplain's Perspective* (Prescott, AZ: Hohm Press, 2012), Kindle Location 863.

³² Mark D. Layson et al., "Factors Influencing Military Personnel Utilizing Chaplains: A Literature Scoping Review," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61, no. 2 (04, 2022): 2.

do not is worth exploring.³³ Since chaplains face many concerns, one would believe that theological training would further benefit those serving. In his book *Foundations of Chaplaincy: A Practical Guide*, Alan Baker states, “Seminary education, paired with the chaplain’s temperament, reinforces skills and expertise needed to accomplish the important work of genuinely supporting others.”³⁴ However, not everyone can attend a theological institution for specialized training, but other training can be attained. Author Robert Perkins believes that chaplaincy is as essential as any other ministry profession and requires specialized training for the chaplain to be successful.³⁵ Therefore, a chaplain should do everything possible to obtain training to be more equipped to address the issues they will encounter.

The researcher believes that training should be a prerequisite for anyone desiring to be a chaplain at the sheriff’s office. Therefore, the researcher will develop a training curriculum that identifies the need for a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry and the role of local pastors in providing such a ministry. Through much-conducted research, the researcher has found a literature gap in implementing a law enforcement chaplaincy ministry. Chaplain John Crose and others recommend the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) for chaplaincy training opportunities.³⁶ The researcher visited their website and found a wealth of information that may assist him in developing requirements and expectations for chaplains.

Chaplains are expected to be present and ready to serve law enforcement personnel in need. A chaplain understands that ministry activities and religious policies do not transform

³³ Wendy Cadge et al., “Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers: The Emergence and Growth of Chaplaincy Programs in Theological Education,” *Pastoral Psychology* 69, no. 3 (2020): 205.

³⁴ Baker, *Foundations of Chaplaincy*, 86.

³⁵ Perkins, *The Practical Guide to Police Chaplaincy*, 3.

³⁶ John L. Crose, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2017), 103.

lives. It is presence and availability to others that make the difference.³⁷ The researcher has discovered that his most valuable gift is the ministry of presence. It is essential to be willing to witness hope and consolation during times of despair.³⁸ Unfortunately, some are only chaplains by name and are unavailable when needed. Their attitude is, “Call me if you need me, and I’ll try to be there.” Within the requirements and expectations document the researcher wishes to develop for the CCSO, a minimum of four hours a month will be required for all chaplains to volunteer at the sheriff’s office. Chaplains who are unwilling to volunteer their time do not see the importance of their presence.

The Ministry of Presence is defined as “being present at the right time and place.”³⁹ It means going above and beyond by consistently being available even when inconvenient. It is not what the chaplain says but their presence that speaks volumes to those in a crisis. Yet, some believe that the Ministry of Presence has received disproportionate attention. They believe chaplains should engage individuals in conversation by posing questions that compel them to pause.⁴⁰ Both views of the Ministry of Presence are correct. The researcher believes that he and other chaplains must be present and good listeners. Yet, the time comes when they must verbally engage those in need. In other words, there is a time to listen and speak. Chaplains who are sensitive and able to discern between the two will be an asset to their department.

Chaplains are expected to be available and effective in ministering to people from diverse backgrounds. Individuals representing a wide range of spiritual perspectives are included in this

³⁷ Baker, *Foundations of Chaplaincy*, 130.

³⁸ Thomas W. Shane, *Crisis Pastoral Care: A Police Chaplain’s Perspective*, Kindle, location 863.

³⁹ Katie Tunks Leach, Joanne Lewis, and Tracy Levett-Jones, “Staff Perceptions on the Role and Value of Chaplains in First Responder and Military Settings: A Scoping Review,” *Journal of High Threat & Austere Medicine* 2, no. 1 (2020): 9.

⁴⁰ Wendy Cadge et al., “Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers,” *Pastoral Psychology* 69, no. 3 (2020): 205.

group.⁴¹ Once a chaplaincy ministry has been established, the researcher will strategically pair chaplains with deputies of different theological backgrounds than theirs each month. This will be good for both the deputy and chaplain. As the chaplain encounters people with theological beliefs that differ from their own, they must never show disrespect but display a servant's heart by "living in the light of the cross." By doing so, the chaplain can minister "in the light of the cross."⁴² If the chaplain fails to treat officers respectfully, others will notice, and the chaplain will not be trusted. Yet, the trusted chaplain will be someone others come to when they need counsel, even if the chaplain is from a different religious background. More officers will come to a trusted chaplain before confiding in a psychologist or supervisor due to concerns that their conversation will not be kept private.⁴³ Available and trusted chaplains will add much value to a department by counseling law enforcement personnel who may not feel comfortable talking to others.

Theological Foundations

The chaplaincy ministry is founded on a biblical foundation supporting those with significant responsibilities and needs, as demonstrated by the priesthood throughout Scripture. As a result, chaplains actively minister in various settings, including the United States military, legislative branches of government, hospitals, professional sports, law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical services. Chaplaincy ministry did not begin due to human ingenuity but is witnessed throughout the Scripture. Although the term "chaplain" is not found in the Bible, the concept of chaplaincy ministry appears in both the Old and New Testaments. In this section, the

⁴¹ Wendy Cadge et al., "Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers," 205.

⁴² Adrian Muller, "On Doing Chaplaincy Under the Cross of Christ," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 53, no. 2 (2019): 62.

⁴³ Leach et al., "Staff Perceptions on the Role and Value of Chaplains," 10.

researcher will share biblical accounts that serve as a foundation for Christian chaplaincy ministry to law enforcement personnel.

Old Testament Foundation for Chaplaincy Ministry

The Old Testament gives evidence of chaplaincy ministry. Early in history, Israel was a theocracy, opposed to how most modern democracies distinguish between church and state.⁴⁴ In Deut. 20:2–4, the Word of God introduces the priests who accompany the Israelite army into battle.

And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people and shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.

The term “priest” does not refer to the high priest but rather the priest who followed the army into war. This priest reminded his troops that the Lord would help them.⁴⁵ Earl S. Kalland gives further details on the priest’s role. He notes that the priest prepared the army for battle by assuring the soldiers of God’s presence and ability to fight and defeat their adversaries.⁴⁶ The fourfold exhortation in this passage is direct: do not be timid, fearful, terrified, or succumb to panic.⁴⁷ Likewise, chaplains must also serve in this role in the dangerous world of law enforcement. Although police officers should always remain vigilant, they do not need to fear those who may cause them harm. The chaplain encourages officers by reminding them that the

⁴⁴ Baker, *Foundations of Chaplaincy*, 20.

⁴⁵ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol.1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 939.

⁴⁶ Kalland, “Deuteronomy,” 128.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Lord goes before them and that He can protect them and provide for all their needs (Deut. 20:4; Isa. 54:17; Ps. 34:17).

The priest (chaplain) bravely speaks encouraging words to the soldiers he serves in the middle of combat. Robert Crick states that the chaplain's role as an encourager is critical.⁴⁸ Priests like chaplains are integral to military operations because they serve as God's representatives to their troops. The mere presence of a chaplain is sufficient to instill confidence and calmness.⁴⁹ In Exod. 14:10–12, the Israelites were concerned that the Egyptians would overtake them and that they would die. Moses quickly took on the role of a chaplain and encouraged the Israelites to stay calm, knowing that the battle belonged to the Lord. Although most of the Israelites failed to realize the significance of God's promise to protect them (14:2–4), Moses grasped it and believed it.⁵⁰ He encouraged the Israelites by instructing them not to fear but to remain firm and still.⁵¹

The priest's and Moses' mission reassured believers that God was fighting alongside them in the battle. This is presented first and foremost as the primary criterion for military engagement. In practice, the priest would address the army once it had been recruited and would soon engage in combat, as verse 2 explains.⁵² Just as the priest and Moses were present when Israel engaged in war, so must the law enforcement chaplain be there for those they serve. Chaplains must remember that they represent the presence of the Lord and should constantly

⁴⁸ Robert Crick, *Outside the Gates: Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries* (Oviedo, FL: Higher Life Publishing, 2012), 236.

⁴⁹ Terry Morgan, *The Chaplain's Role*, 66.

⁵⁰ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, *The New American Commentary*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2006), 336.

⁵¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," in *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 387.

⁵² August H. Konkel, *ESV Expository Commentary: Deuteronomy-Ruth*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 195.

remind officers that God is with them wherever they go (Josh. 1:9; Isa. 41:10). Chaplains should also speak encouraging words to those they serve. Unfortunately, police officers hear many derogatory comments throughout the day. A vigilant chaplain understands the need to inspire others and takes advantage of opportunities to speak words of life. The chaplain must pray like David, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). When the words we speak to others are pleasing to God, they will offer hope for life’s challenges.

Through the examples of the priest who accompanied the Israelite army into battle and the role of encourager that Moses played when the Israelites were at war with the Egyptians, one finds evidence of chaplaincy ministry. The priest and Moses reminded the Israelites of God’s faithfulness to help and protect them from their enemies. In law enforcement chaplaincy, it is the responsibility of the chaplain to do the same. So often, police officers become discouraged, and many end their careers early. However, a chaplain’s encouragement and gentle words can positively impact officers to know that through Christ, there is hope. A chaplain who encourages people is a blessing to everyone.

New Testament Foundation for Chaplaincy Ministry

The New Testament lays the theological framework for chaplaincy ministry through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. As a follower of Christ, a chaplain is called to be an imitator of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:1). Jesus ministered to the hurting and impoverished regardless of race, creed, or color. A Christ-honoring chaplain will do the same by intentionally ministering to everyone they encounter. The story of the Samaritan woman at the well found in the fourth chapter of John is a beautiful example of how Jesus exercised chaplaincy ministry to people outside the temple walls. It was His standard practice to meet people at their place of need and

on their turf. The Jews despised the Samaritan race as having no claim on their God and considered them half-breeds.⁵³ This Samaritan woman came to the community well alone, which was uncommon in biblical times. It proved that her people shunned her.⁵⁴ The practice of women walking together to this well and drawing water from it was the social highlight of their day. Unfortunately for the Samaritan woman, she was despised and labeled immoral because she was unmarried and openly living with a man she was not married to after having five husbands. However, Jesus knew this woman was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and despite everyone else ridiculing her, He showed her His unconditional love. Ultimately, this story portrays God's love toward people regardless of their sins and seeks to invite them into a personal relationship with Him. This act of service and love is also the duty of all chaplains.

Frederick Bruner expresses that for a man to converse with a woman in this manner in public was considered unusual. It was even more irregular for a Jewish individual to speak in public with a Samaritan, male or female. Nevertheless, Jesus effortlessly and simply dismantles all unnatural and inhumane barriers and meets the needs of this Samaritan woman regardless of her identity.⁵⁵ Chaplains must be willing to minister to those others persistently avoid while maintaining their authentic Christian identities in a diverse and multifaceted field of ministry.

The story of the centurion's servant in Matt. 8:5–13 provides another theological framework for chaplaincy ministry. In these verses, a Roman centurion petitions Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant. Showing no reluctance, Jesus informs the man, without hesitation, that He

⁵³ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 25A (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1996), 166.

⁵⁴ Merrill C. Tenney, *John and Acts*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 54.

⁵⁵ Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012) 251.

will come to his house and heal the servant. The centurion quickly acknowledges the ritual uncleanliness barriers that would prohibit a Jew from going into his home and responds that he is unworthy of Jesus going to his house and requests that he speak healing words so his servant may be well.⁵⁶ Jesus is moved by this man's trust in him and praises him for his great faith in the presence of his disciples. Thus, Jesus rewards the centurion's faith by healing his servant.

The role of a centurion was significant. According to D. A. Carson, centurions served as the military backbone of the empire, enforcing discipline and executive orders.⁵⁷ This centurion was a gentile and responsible for at least one hundred troops.⁵⁸ These men oversaw the army, and many of their tasks would be classified today as law enforcement duties. Centurions undoubtedly understood their role in establishing peace and fulfilling their responsibilities. In this story, Jesus models and establishes the biblical authority for law enforcement ministry. For example, he proves that he is ready to be a servant. Even though this centurion was a gentile and Jews despised them, Jesus saw him as someone with a need. He responded to the centurion with love and compassion as he shared his servant's physical condition with Jesus. This selfless act of being ready to serve exemplified the type of life the apostle Paul instructed the Philippians to live and one that every chaplain must emulate. Philippians 2:4–5 states, "Let each of you look not only to his interests but also to the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." When chaplains are committed to seeing others through Christ's eyes, they will have divine appointments, just as Jesus did with the centurion.

⁵⁶ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, ed. David S. Dockery, vol. 22, (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 141.

⁵⁷ D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol.8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 200–201.

⁵⁸ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 141.

When Jesus met the Roman centurion, He chose to meet him at his place of need. He modeled unconditional love by ministering to this man and demonstrated to his disciples what it meant to minister to those different from us. Likewise, the law enforcement chaplain's role is to meet people in the framework of their lives. Just as Jesus did not require the centurion to forsake his gentile beliefs and convert to Judaism, neither should a chaplain insist on others confessing Christ before ministering to their needs. Recognizing their divine calling, chaplains must follow Christ's example and minister to all people regardless of their differences (1 Pet. 2:21). This is another way for chaplains to reflect the life of Christ by being the salt and light of the Earth (Matt. 5:14–16). Jesus' followers are not assured that those without Christ will become Christians because of effective sharing, but believers are commissioned to challenge the lost to live up to God's standards.⁵⁹

Jesus' encounter with the Roman centurion exemplifies how He ministered to each individual's needs and is a perfect model for law enforcement chaplains to follow. First, chaplains are reminded to meet people's physical needs through Christ's example. Jesus miraculously healed the centurion's servant. While chaplains cannot physically heal people, they can pray for their healing and provide physical assistance. Second, Jesus met the emotional and social needs of this centurion. He ministered to his emotional needs by relieving him of the stress of dealing with a paralyzed servant. The centurion's social needs were met by Jesus accepting him as a gentile. Finally, Jesus fulfilled the spiritual needs of the centurion. Jesus' acknowledgment of the centurion's faith proved his faith and trust in Christ. As chaplains follow Christ, they are called to help meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those they serve.

⁵⁹ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 103.

Additionally, the New Testament also gives an example of Jesus selflessly ministering to a soldier in His own time of need. This event is recorded in Luke 22 and John 18 when Jesus is preparing to fulfill the purpose of offering Himself as a sacrifice for humanity's sin, for which He left heaven and came to Earth. When Jesus was arrested, Peter determined that he would not forsake Jesus and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. Merrill C. Tenney suggests that Malchus, referred to as "the high priest's servant" could have indeed held the position of "the special deputy to the high priest" in the apprehension of Jesus.⁶⁰ This implies that Malchus was on the front lines during this mission, and John, like Peter, could have reached out and touched him. Jesus immediately acted as a peacemaker, telling Peter to put away his sword and healed Malchus. Chaplains must depend on God to give them strength to minister to everyone they serve. They must spend time with God daily to keep their focus on His purpose and love for people. They must also apply this compassion to law enforcement officers and their support personnel, even when they may not deserve it. This reminds chaplains that Jesus valued the needs of everyone He encountered.

Following Biblical Examples of Chaplaincy by Applying God's Word

The biblical examples mentioned so far are worth following. The chaplain must apply God's Word to follow these examples effectively. God's Word is full of practical lessons that must be implemented to fulfill Scripture as chaplains minister. Therefore, this researcher will focus on prayer, evangelism, and humility.

The Christian chaplain is called to be in a continual attitude of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12). The apostle Paul expected believers to approach God with intercessions privately

⁶⁰ Tenney, *John and Acts*, 169.

and publicly.⁶¹ When ministering to law enforcement personnel, prayer must be a chaplain's initial action, not an afterthought or something done as a last resort. It does not matter how much experience or training a chaplain has; most of the assignments they assist law enforcement with are constantly changing. The nature of the call is often beyond a chaplain's capability and will require much prayer.

For this reason, prayer must be an active discipline in a chaplain's life, just as it was in the life of Christ. Jesus prayed alone in a solitary place in Mark 1:35, demonstrating his reliance upon His heavenly Father. Before embarking on another busy day of ministering to the needs of others, Jesus starts His day by seeking a quiet place to pray that is free from distractions. He finds divine power in this place that can only be obtained through communion with the Father.⁶² Just as Jesus prayed alone to His heavenly Father, the Christian chaplains should also prioritize this in their lives (Matt. 26:41; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16–18). Prayer and connecting with God demonstrates a Christian's submission and dependence on Him. There is no better example than Jesus' prayer to His Father in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prayed shortly before His crucifixion for His Father's will to be accomplished in his life (Luke 22:42). By freely laying down His life on the cross, Jesus submitted to His Father's will and command (John 10:18). Prayer, just as it did in Jesus' life, results in submission to God's will in the life of the follower of Christ. This submission to God through prayer assists the chaplain in evangelizing the lost.

In Matt. 28:19–20, Jesus instructs us to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have

⁶¹ D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 33 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1995), 181.

⁶² Walter W. Wessel, “Mark,” in *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebel, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 629.

commanded you.” According to Donald S. Whitney, Jesus’ followers must engage in evangelism. He does not expect all Christians to evangelize similarly, but He expects all Christians to share their faith.⁶³ Not only does Jesus command His followers to share their faith with others through witnessing to the lost, but He also empowers them to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). When Christians share the gospel, they inform others of Christ’s unconditional love for the world (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Christ’s death, according to Paul, was a demonstration of His (and God’s) love. His love compelled Him to leave the splendor of heaven and come to this world to rescue those who were perishing (Luke 19:10). A chaplain’s commitment to proclaiming the gospel to lost people demonstrates their love for God and others. Evangelism was central to Jesus’ life, and when chaplains evangelize, their hearts become aligned with His.

It is critical to note that Christian chaplains are motivated to practice the previous disciplines by practicing the spiritual discipline of humility. Without humility, there is no reason for the believer to witness to lost people or practice prayer. Prayer is unnecessary because the individual who does not pray feels that they do not need the Lord’s help and depend upon their abilities. On the other hand, humility demonstrates one’s dependence on and need for Christ. “Learn from me,” Jesus said in Matt. 11:29, “for I am gentle and lowly in heart.” Jesus demonstrated His humility to His disciples by taking on the servant role and washing their feet (John 13:1–17). If Jesus, whom the disciples revered as Master, knelt and took time to conduct a slave’s job by washing the disciple’s feet, followers of Christ should humble themselves and do the same for one another.⁶⁴ According to Andrew Murray, His humility bestowed value on His

⁶³ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 120.

⁶⁴ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, vol. 36 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1999), 235.

death, which provided our redemption.⁶⁵ Humility adds value to the believer's life and teaches believers the worth of lost people. Christ's humility at work in a chaplain's life enables them to recognize the value of each person and results in the chaplain having a sincere love for others.

Theoretical Foundation

The researcher discovered little verifiable research in law enforcement chaplaincy in the last five to ten years. Most chaplaincy research is focused on the areas of hospital, hospice, and military chaplaincy. There has been considerable discussion of the requirements and expectations of chaplains serving in these sectors, but law enforcement chaplaincy has received less attention. Although relatively no recent research has taken place to discuss how to develop a law enforcement chaplaincy ministry, as previously mentioned, much has been written concerning the need for such. This type of ministry is warranted because many emotional, physical, and spiritual needs are not addressed. As a result, some agencies have established these ministries to help minister to these needs. For example, Jan McCormack, who founded the Denver Seminary chaplaincy program, stated, "We chaplains don't wait for people to come to us. We go to them."⁶⁶ Various law enforcement agencies desire to be proactive and equip chaplains to go to those in need. In this section, the researcher will discuss current police chaplaincy ministry models and demonstrate how he will avoid, apply, and improve these models.

Lay Leader Lead Chaplaincy Ministries

The Old Testament gives evidence of law enforcement chaplaincy ministry, and Jesus, through His earthly ministry, demonstrates how such a ministry should be conducted. In the

⁶⁵ Andrew Murray, *Humility* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2017), 5.

⁶⁶ Wendy, Cadge et al., "Training Chaplains and Spiritual Caregivers: The Emergence and Growth of Chaplaincy Programs in Theological Education," *Pastoral Psychology* 69, no. 3 (06, 2020): 200.

same way, numerous models of law enforcement chaplaincy ministries are utilized in various agencies. Frequently, police departments will accept any lay leader willing to help them in this capacity. The Hanceville Police Department (HPD) of Alabama relies heavily upon volunteer church lay leaders to serve as on-call chaplains for their agency.⁶⁷ Individuals interested in volunteering in this capacity must fill out and sign an application and then be interviewed by the police chief. After a positive meeting with the police chief, the person is welcomed to the on-call chaplain team. Chaplains are not encouraged to engage with officers unless they are called. In addition, no uniform or other gear that identifies individuals as HPD chaplains is issued. There is no official on-call rotation system, and chaplains only interact with law enforcement personnel when they are reached to offer assistance.⁶⁸ No training to help chaplains sharpen their skills and stay current is provided. There is also no handbook to serve as a guide for this chaplaincy program. The lack of a manual may be why only one chaplain is actively serving within this department, as departments not supplying a handbook often lack volunteers.⁶⁹ HPD chaplains are discouraged from being proactive and sit idly by waiting to be allowed to minister. This model lacks vision and structure. Unfortunately, this model is ineffective because police officers often need more than just the average church member to help minister to their needs. They also deserve someone they can trust if they are going to share personal struggles. Trust takes time to build and cannot be harvested when chaplains cannot spend time with officers on duty. This model may be the quickest way to launch a chaplaincy program, but its sustainability and effectiveness are unknown. The researcher will not use this model since it discourages chaplains

⁶⁷ HPD Chaplain, interview by researcher, City of Hanceville, February 23, 2022.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Demelza, Leahy, Ian Pepper, and Paula Light, "Recruiting Police Support Volunteers for Their Professional Knowledge and Skills: A Pilot Study." *Police Journal* (Chichester) 94, no. 3 (2021;2020): 283.

from ministering to people beyond when they are called to address needs. Consequently, this model makes it hard for a chaplain to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Also, in Alabama, the Enterprise Police Department (EPD) recruits volunteer ministers and lay leaders and supplements their chaplaincy programs through licensed and unlicensed volunteer counselors.⁷⁰ Volunteer help is made possible by individuals who give their time and energy to others without compensation.⁷¹ Adding licensed counselors to law enforcement chaplaincy can be a tremendous asset. Research has proven that many police officers suffer from alcohol addiction and suicidal thoughts. The divorce rate in their profession is higher than in others, too.⁷² Counselors licensed to practice may assist police officers who struggle in these areas. On the other hand, unlicensed counselors may not be trusted by law enforcement personnel and could create liability concerns.

To help foster relationship-building between chaplains and officers, the EPD encourages chaplains to conduct ride-alongs. The police chief understands that this allows the chaplain to minister. In addition, chaplains are provided with an official identification badge that they can wear around their necks so others can easily recognize them. Due to budget restraints, no other forms of identification are provided. However, chaplains can purchase a polo similar to what some officers wear. These shirts have a badge on the left and the chaplain's name embroidered across the right front side of the shirt. While this model is more robust than the previous one, it does not have a handbook and provides no training. Therefore, it is insufficient and leaves much to be desired.

⁷⁰ Chaplain Fox Fleming, interview by researcher, City of Enterprise, February 24, 2022.

⁷¹ Demelza, Leahy, Ian Pepper, and Paula Light, 282–97.

⁷² John L. Cross, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2017), Kindle, 729.

Led by Experienced and Equipped Local Pastors

Many law enforcement agencies require their chaplains to be ordained or licensed ministers. Some deem this necessary because they believe it provides a certain degree of validation. In other words, the chaplain is not just the average church member but is someone who has proven themselves to be called to the ministry. However, the requirement for ordained or licensed chaplains exceeds validation. Chaplain Terry Morgan notes a licensed or ordained chaplain has privileged communication. When a chaplain provides counseling or conducts a ride-along with a police officer, they can be assured that their conversation is private and will not be disclosed to anyone.⁷³ When an officer knows that their conversations are and will remain confidential, lines of communication are opened. This provides opportunities for the chaplain to minister as Christ did by meeting people at their place of need. The only time that privileged communication is compromised is when someone shares that they are suicidal, have committed elder or child abuse, or intend to hurt themselves or someone else.⁷⁴ Of course, chaplains must obey the law and inform the proper authorities when this happens.

The Huntsville City Police Department (HPD) chaplaincy ministry is well respected and has several components worth emulating. This chaplaincy ministry works under the Huntsville/Madison County Public Safety Chaplaincy umbrella, a non-profit 501(C)(3). One requirement for all chaplains is that they are ordained or licensed ministers with at least two years of ministry experience.⁷⁵ In addition, chaplains must reflect the life of Christ and be willing

⁷³ Morgan, "The Chaplain's Role," 117.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Huntsville Public Safety Chaplains, *Join the Team*, accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.madisoncountychaplains.org/join>.

to minister to people from all walks of life, not discriminating against one's race or religion.⁷⁶ They follow Jesus' example as He ministered to the Samaritan woman.

This chaplaincy model requires all chaplains to attend regular training and serve ninety-six hours yearly. An on-call system needs chaplains to be ready to serve twenty-four hours a day over seven days. When chaplains conduct ride-alongs, they must wear the mandatory attire to identify as HPD chaplains. All chaplains are expected to keep up with their service hours and are asked to submit a monthly report stating the time they have served.⁷⁷ Although this chaplaincy model has many positive attributes, some areas can be improved.

The Ideal Chaplaincy Model

The researcher's ideal chaplaincy ministry model involves recruiting local pastors to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO in Cullman, Alabama. Although these pastors will serve as volunteers, the researcher understands that volunteers can be costly if adequately equipped and trained.⁷⁸ Therefore, he will meet with the sheriff to discuss proper budget allotment. Next, the researcher will attend the upcoming Cullman County Minister's Alliance (CCMA) meeting, which comprises pastors from various Christian denominations. At this meeting, he will inquire if any pastors are interested in serving at the sheriff's office. Preference will be given to senior pastors and church counselors. Numerous pastors have received specialized training in college or seminary and can address law enforcement issues.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ "Join the Team," <https://www.madisoncountychaplains.org/join>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ross Wolf, and Thomas Bryer, "Applying an Outcomes-Based Categorization to Non-Warranted/Non-Sworn Volunteers in United States Policing," *The Police Journal* 93, no. 1 (March 2020): 42–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X19837309>.

⁷⁹ John L. Cross, *The Exciting World of a Police Chaplain*, 73.

The researcher believes pastors bring educational experience and a wealth of spiritual knowledge that lay leaders lack.

Another requirement for prospective chaplains is that they are ordained or licensed and currently serving within a Cullman County church. These individuals must also be at least twenty-one years old and have at least three years of ministry experience. All prospective chaplains must attend the training conducted by this researcher before officially becoming a chaplain. In addition, they must attend at least one chaplaincy training workshop during the year.

After years of observing chaplaincy programs while serving in law enforcement, the researcher discovered that many programs fail to address the spiritual needs of their officers. As a result, the researcher will assist in meeting the spiritual needs of those employed at the CCSO by developing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. However, before spiritual needs can be met, a bond of trust must be established between law enforcement personnel and chaplains. The key to developing confidence is centered around building relationships. Without relationships, a chaplain's ministry is meaningless. Recognizing that relationships take time, the researcher will require the chaplains he recruits to commit to a minimum of four hours per month conducting ride-alongs and visiting sheriff's office personnel. Rather than chaplains filling out a monthly report to keep them accountable for participating in ride-alongs, each will be given a call sign. When a chaplain rides with a deputy, dispatch will be notified, and the chaplain's time will be recorded in the CCSO computer system. At the end of each month, reports will be sent to the researcher to hold chaplains accountable.

Once relationships are established, the door to ministry opens, allowing chaplains to cross the "blue wall." Chaplaincy programs that fail to build relationships with law enforcement can never breach this barrier, and true ministry will never occur. This is why the model the

researcher wishes to establish will first focus on developing relationships to meet the numerous needs of police officers.

The goal of the researcher's law enforcement chaplaincy model is to reflect the life of Jesus as outlined in the scriptures. His model will differ from others used in various departments throughout Alabama because it will seek to minister to people in the framework of their individual lives. In other words, chaplains will be challenged to meet officers at their place of need. Much focus will be on ministering to law enforcement personnel's physical and emotional needs. However, greater emphasis will be placed on ministering to the spiritual needs of those serving at the CCSO.

One of the ways that spiritual needs will be addressed is by offering all employees the opportunity to participate in a weekly Bible study held in one of the training rooms at the sheriff's office. The researcher is unaware of any chaplaincy programs that offer such a ministry. However, he is excited to see how the Lord will use a Bible study to encourage spiritual growth in the lives of law enforcement personnel. Recently, the researcher attended a Billy Graham Rapid Response Chaplaincy Training conference and learned there is a spiritual awakening taking place in the lives of police officers. His prayer is that a Bible study within the sheriff's office will provide a move of God in the agency in which he serves.

By concentrating on meeting the needs of police officers, including their spiritual needs, the researcher's chaplaincy model will be unique. Officers face many challenges and knowing that a chaplain is concerned about their soul speaks volumes to police personnel. This chaplaincy model will be grounded in God's Word. It will seek to honor the Lord in every ministry it provides. This type of chaplaincy ministry relies on faithful chaplains and the agency's leader. The researcher is thankful that his sheriff supports and desires to assist with such a ministry.

The researcher is excited about learning from other chaplaincy ministries within Alabama. There are several chaplaincy ministries that the researcher can learn from and apply to his current agency. Through much hard work, he believes that the program he will implement will be Christ-centered and one that others will desire to emulate.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This thesis will address the problem of deputies' and civilian employees' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs being unmet because the CCSO lacks a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. The researcher will present an intervention design that entails the implementation of recruiting and training prospective chaplains to help minister to deputies and civilian staff at the CCSO. Upon implementing this intervention design, the researcher anticipates those serving within the sheriff's office will better handle the daily stresses of law enforcement work, resulting in healthier emotional, physical, and spiritual lives. This intervention design will also assist in enhancing the chaplains' understanding of the inherent stressors associated with law enforcement duties, providing them with a solid basis for further developing their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, chaplains will understand the obligations and responsibilities related to their role, enabling them to establish and foster trustworthy relationships with CCSO personnel. These relationships will open the door for ministry opportunities to the sheriff's office employees.

Intervention Design

Implementing action research will involve using qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO. When conducting action research through qualitative means, purposeful sampling is utilized. Participants are wisely chosen based on a specific set of criteria.¹ This researcher plans to accomplish this task by interviewing lead chaplains in three law enforcement agencies within Alabama. He will also interview prospective chaplains desiring to serve at the CCSO who are ordained ministers serving in a Cullman County church. He will then interview numerous law enforcement

¹ Ernest T. Stinger, *Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 76.

personnel at the CCSO having six or more years of service. Finally, this researcher will interview the sheriff's office Command Staff and seek their input for developing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. In addition to selecting the interviewees wisely, qualitative research methods will be accomplished through these interviews by discussing personal life stories and experiences.²

After completing his qualitative research, this researcher will utilize quantitative methods through Likert scales and interview questions. Although this research typically includes hundreds of individuals, only the CCSO personnel and prospective chaplains will participate. This researcher is confident that the data collected from these questions will help lay the foundation for establishing a healthy, comprehensive chaplaincy ministry for his agency.

Intervention Timeline

The timeline for this intervention strategy will span from the onset of spring to the early summer of 2023. This timeframe will extend approximately eleven weeks to obtain the following: IRB approval, permissions, recruitment of participants, responses to the pre-training interview questions, Likert scales, the logistics of the chaplain training sessions at the CCSO Training Center, information addressing the post-training, and data analysis. The following steps help complete this timeline.

² Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene:Wipf & Stock, 2018), 57.

IRB Approval and Permissions

The first step before launching the research methodology is to receive IRB approval (IRB Approval Letter at the end of the thesis). After receiving this approval, the second step will be to email Sheriff Matt Gentry a permission request letter informing him of his thesis project and desire to conduct research at the CCSO. This letter will appear in Appendix A. Attached to this email will be a permission response letter for him to complete and sign (Appendix B). After the sheriff has officially granted the researcher permission to conduct his thesis project, he will schedule an appointment to discuss further how he plans to begin this task.

Recruitment of Participants

The second step is to recruit individuals to participate in this research project. The researcher will recruit four different groups of individuals to join in his thesis project. The first group to be contacted will be lead chaplains in Alabama law enforcement agencies. The second group to be pursued are Cullman County pastors who can serve as CCSO Chaplains. The next group of people the researcher will recruit are deputies who have worked at the CCSO for at least six years. Finally, he will secure the Command Staff Leaders at the CCSO to participate in a focus group.

Alabama Law Enforcement Chaplain Leaders

The first group to be recruited are three lead law enforcement chaplains in Alabama. The researcher believes there is much to learn from chaplains already providing chaplaincy ministry to their agencies. The lead chaplain from a north Alabama police department will be contacted first. Initially, this individual will be contacted by phone to establish a rapport. During this conversation, the researcher will introduce himself and his thesis project. An interview will be

scheduled upon establishing a relationship with this lead chaplain. A face-to-face interview is preferred since this sheriff's office is only fifty miles north of Cullman. However, before the interview, the researcher will email the interviewee explaining his project and include a consent form requesting it to be signed and returned (Appendix C and D). Also included will be a "Chaplain Leader's Interview Questions" that will be discussed in the interview later (Appendix E). After the consent form is returned, the researcher will call and schedule an interview. The above process will be followed when the researcher recruits and interviews the last two chaplain leaders serving in Alabama.

The second individual to be recruited will be a lead chaplain at the north-central Alabama sheriff's office. Less than thirty miles from Cullman, this agency is the closest sheriff's office to the CCSO with a chaplaincy program. This researcher believes he can learn essential information from this neighboring department.

Finally, this researcher will recruit a southwest Alabama city police department chief chaplain. This department has had a paid full-time chaplain for decades and has one of the state's most respected chaplaincy ministries to LEOs. This researcher is excited to build a relationship with this chaplain and glean from his many years of experience.

Prospective Chaplains

The second group to be recruited is prospective chaplains. When the chaplain program at the CCSO was first developed under a previous administration, an ad was taken out in one of the local advertising publications. This researcher believes that this is not an effective recruiting strategy. Therefore, he will consult with pastors from the CCMA and create a list of full-time pastors from various denominations. The researcher will then email pastors, emphasizing the need for local pastors to help minister to the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of deputies

at the CCSO (Appendix F). This email will include a Prospective Chaplain Consent Form (Appendix G) and interview questions (Appendix H) to be discussed in a future pre-training interview. Once the signed consent form has been returned, the researcher will schedule a pre-training interview at the researcher's church office or another convenient location.

Deputies

The third group to be recruited is deputies. The researcher will recruit one deputy from the seven different divisions within the CCSO. Since the researcher needs to discover deputies' struggles and how chaplains can effectively minister to them, he will only interview deputies who have served at least six years at the sheriff's office. The researcher has worked at the sheriff's office for over seven years and knows the deputies who meet this requirement. A Deputy Recruitment Email will be sent to these deputies to explain the research project and the need for a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry (Appendix I). The email includes an overview of their time commitment so they can make an informed decision. Also, two attachments will be included. The first is a consent form (Appendix J). Deputies interested in participating will be instructed to read, sign, and return this form within seven days. The second attachment is the interview questions (Appendix K). Participants are encouraged to read the questions to prepare for the interview. Upon receiving the signed consent form, the researcher will send another email scheduling an interview. This interview will take place at the researcher's church's coffee shop and will last approximately one hour. If this location is not feasible for the deputy, the meeting will occur at another site. Before the interview begins, the researcher will remind the deputy that the meeting is being recorded on his computer for accuracy and that everything shared is confidential. After answering the questions, deputies will be given a pre-chaplaincy training

rating scale to complete (Appendix L). This scale will be compared to a post-training one provided during the second interview with the deputy.

Focus Group

The final group to be recruited is the CCSO Command Staff Leaders. They will serve as a focus group for the researcher's project. The Command Staff Leaders are the sheriff, chief deputy, major, and chief clerk. This interview will take place with everyone simultaneously and is an additional method of gathering information.³ The interview will be conducted with these leaders around a table in Sheriff Gentry's office. "A table provides a protective barrier between participants, which gives those who feel insecure, or who are a bit more reserved, some sense of security. It also offers a sense of personal space, which may make the participants feel more comfortable in a group."⁴ The focus group has one hundred sixteen years of combined experience. Before the interview, each prospective group member will receive an email explaining the research project (Appendix M). Attached to this email will be the Liberty University informed consent document (Appendix N). Once this document has been signed and returned within seven days, a meeting in the sheriff's office will be scheduled. In this preliminary meeting, the researcher will explain that he has recorded each interview in this process so that accurate information can be logged. He will then ask the sheriff for permission to record this upcoming meeting. After meeting with the sheriff, this researcher will email all four individuals confirming the day, time, and place of our discussion.

³ Stinger, *Action Research*, 110.

⁴ Prance Liamputtong, *Focus Group Methodology: Principle and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011), 72.

The purpose of forming a focus group comprised of the command staff leaders is so that those with the most significant influence can be an integral part of developing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. Before this meeting, an email containing the questions will be sent to each person (Appendix O). During the interview, these leaders will be asked key questions that will benefit the recruitment and training of prospective chaplains. There are eleven questions to be asked, which will allow for candid discussion. It will conclude with an open-ended question to elicit suggestions for having a robust, comprehensive chaplaincy ministry.

Pre-Training Interviews with Participants

The fourth step is interviewing four groups before the chaplaincy training sessions are taught to prospective chaplains. The first group to be interviewed are three chaplain leaders serving in law enforcement agencies within Alabama. Once these interviews are completed, he will interview prospective CCSO chaplains. The next group to be interviewed is the deputies serving at the CCSO. Finally, the researcher will interview the CCSO Command Staff leaders.

Chaplain Leaders

This researcher will begin the interview process by interviewing the three lead law enforcement chaplains he secured during recruitment. The first chaplain interviewed is from the Huntsville City Police Department. Before the interview begins, the researcher will remind this chaplain that the interview is being recorded for accuracy. In this interview, qualitative research will be conducted through twelve questions presented by this researcher (Appendix E). The first question will reveal how well the chaplaincy program is established. The second question will justify law enforcement chaplaincy. The third question will help determine the qualifications and expectations of the department's chaplains. The fourth and fifth questions reveal prospective

chaplains' application and background check process. The sixth through eighth questions determine if non-sworn chaplains can carry a duty weapon, their typical attire, and what the department issues chaplains. Finally, questions nine through twelve discuss chaplaincy training options provided and areas for improvement within their chaplaincy program.

The information gathered in this interview will be compared to interviews with other departments. This interview will be recorded from this researcher's computer. After the meeting has been transcribed, the researcher will email the interviewee a copy of the transcription to determine accuracy. If changes are needed, the interviewee will be asked to make corrections. Upon completing the interview transcription, the interviewee will email it to this researcher. After this step, the researcher will permanently delete the interviewee's audio recording from his computer. The transcription will be used in the research process and kept on file for three years. It will then be placed in a locked drop box at the CCSO for sensitive documents, where it will remain until it is destroyed by a hired company called Shred-it.

The second interview will occur with the Chaplain Coordinator of a north-central Alabama sheriff's office. This researcher hopes to conduct an in-person interview since it is less than thirty miles from Cullman. The same questions asked during the previous chaplain interview will be used when meeting with this chaplain coordinator.

In addition to these two interviews, this researcher will interview the chief chaplain of a southwest Alabama police department. This interview will not be in person since it is over a three-hundred-mile drive. Like the previous interviews, an initial phone call to the chief chaplain will be made. This researcher will introduce himself and inform this chaplain of his doctoral thesis project. If this individual is willing to participate, a Zoom meeting will be scheduled. A study on the advantages of using Zoom for qualitative research showed that "The majority of

participants (68%) identified Zoom as a preferred method compared to in-person interviews, telephone, or other videoconferencing platforms.”⁵ Researchers prefer to use this platform because of the following “Logistical considerations: (1) rapport, (2) convenience, and (3) simplicity and user-friendliness.”⁶ Additional advantages mentioned for using Zoom during data collection are flexibility in scheduling interviews and cost savings from reduced travel. However, a phone interview will be conducted if this method is inconvenient. After a meeting date is determined, this researcher will inform the chief chaplain that a consent form must be signed before the interview can occur. A copy of the document will be emailed to this individual. (Appendix D). Once it is signed and returned, the meeting will be scheduled.

Prospective Chaplains

The second group to be interviewed will be prospective chaplains (PC). This researcher will email the PC to secure a time and place for an interview. These meetings will occur at the researcher’s church office or another convenient location. During the interview, the researcher will ask the PC questions that were emailed to them during the recruitment process (Appendix H). After the interview, the researcher will ask if they are still interested in serving as a chaplain. Those desiring to serve will be instructed to attend a one-day chaplaincy training at the sheriff’s office. Once the date is secured, all participants will be sent an email informing them when the training will occur.

⁵ Mandy M. Archibald et al., “Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18, (2019): 4.

⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

Deputies

The third group to be interviewed is the deputies who agreed to participate in the researcher's thesis project during recruitment. An email will be sent to each deputy requesting an interview. Upon receiving a reply, the researcher and the deputy will meet at an agreed location. During this recorded interview, the researcher will ask the participant eleven questions that were emailed to the deputy (Appendix K). This researcher is hopeful that the information learned from these interviews will help equip the CCSO Chaplains to minister effectively to everyone at the sheriff's office. In addition to these eight questions, a ten-question Likert will be emailed to the deputies (Appendix L). Each participating deputy will be instructed to complete this before the first interview.

Focus Group

The last group to be interviewed will be a focus group comprised of Sheriff Gentry, the chief deputy, major, and chief clerk. After receiving a reply confirming the focus group interview, the researcher will meet with this group in the sheriff's conference room. During the interview, the researcher will ask eleven questions all participants received by email before the interview (Appendix O). The researcher anticipates that the information gleaned from this meeting will help develop a healthy and vibrant chaplaincy ministry.

Curriculum Development and Training Sessions for Prospective Chaplains

The fourth step is to develop introductory instructional material for the four sessions taught during the chaplaincy training sessions. Every session will include a PowerPoint presentation, and participants will receive a three-ring binder containing this presentation.

Furthermore, space will be provided for prospective chaplains to take additional notes for future

reference. The four sessions taught will provide a solid foundation for chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO. This training will last six hours and will be conducted by the researcher in the Captain Ricky Blackwood Training Center at the sheriff's office.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development will focus on training prospective chaplains to develop a robust foundation for chaplaincy ministry. Before writing the curriculum, this researcher will meet with Dr. Mark Wakefield from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, who teaches training sessions for the International Conference of Police Chaplains. Dr. Wakefield will offer helpful insight into developing a proper curriculum.

This process will also use much of the information gathered from this researcher's Chapter Two literature review and the pre-training interviews. This first lesson will be an introduction to law enforcement chaplaincy, which will discuss the theological framework laid out in the Old and New Testaments and the present need for a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO. The second lesson will focus on the ministry of presence, ride-alongs, and building relationships with deputies. At the end of this session, participants will participate in role-playing. One person will be a deputy, another a chaplain, and the third will be an observer. The third lesson from the curriculum will cover the correct method of delivering death notifications and the different types of notifications chaplains must make. This session will also provide role-playing opportunities. One person will represent a chaplain, the other a family member being informed of a death, and the third will be an observer. Finally, the last session will introduce the seven divisions and their essential roles at the CCSO. See Appendix S for teaching material used during the training.

One-Day Chaplaincy Training

All individuals desiring to be chaplains are required to complete chaplaincy training. This training will be held in the Training Center of the CCSO on a Tuesday or Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Once step two, the recruitment of participants is nearly completed, this researcher will contact Lt. Rebekah Cash, who is responsible for scheduling groups in the Training Center to secure this training on the calendar. Prospective chaplains will sit at tables facing a podium and two projection screens. The curriculum this researcher developed will use PowerPoint and videos to aid in the learning process. In addition, role-playing will occur during the sessions. Each participant will receive a three-ring binder containing the notes and PowerPoint slides used during the four sessions. Lines to the right of each slide will be provided for additional notes to be written. Interaction from attendees will be encouraged through engaging questions and role-playing. At the end of this training, this researcher will give chaplain prospects a chance to ask any questions. Following the question-and-answer time, a list of questions will be distributed to gauge the success of the training sessions (Appendix R). These questions will be returned during the post-training interview with the researcher. Finally, the training will end with a tour of many sheriff's office divisions, including dispatch, investigations, victim services, records, and the detention center. The only two divisions that will not be toured since they are not housed within the main building are Cullman County Courthouse Security and the county schools where the resource officers serve.

Post-Training Interviews with Participants

The sixth step is to conduct post-training interviews. After the chaplaincy training sessions have been taught, a second interview with the prospective chaplains, deputies, and command staff will be held. The researcher will schedule these interviews to evaluate the impact

his training had on sheriff's office personnel and other areas of effectiveness and discuss improvements for future training. Before these meetings, the researcher will email the interviewees the questions he will use to guide the discussion. The pre-training interviews' meeting places and recording process will also be used during all post-training interviews. The interview locations may change if the participant requests to meet at a different site.

Prospective Chaplains

During the post-training interview, chaplains will be asked the five questions they were given after the chaplaincy training day (Appendix R). Before they answer the questions, the researcher will remind them to be truthful and offer constructive criticism, as he desires future training to impact chaplains significantly. Also, during the second meeting with PC, the researcher will discover if they are ready to serve as CCSO chaplains.

In the chaplain post-interview, individuals who have expressed a desire to serve will be given that opportunity. The researcher will email all candidates an Ecclesiastical Endorsement Letter template (Appendix S) and the Chaplain Qualifications and Responsibilities Agreement (Appendix T). Candidates will be instructed to complete and return these items to the CCSO within seven days. In this agreement, chaplains will consent to a criminal background check being completed. Once the background check has returned and nothing disqualifying is revealed, the researcher will contact the candidate via telephone that they have been accepted to serve as a CCSO Chaplain. The researcher will add the new chaplains to the on-call list, and they will begin serving the week they are scheduled. Chaplains usually serve one week out of the month, but it is understood that they are on-call 24/7, so they may be called upon at any time.

The on-call schedule begins on Mondays and concludes on Sundays. Typically, chaplains' first order of business is to attend the Command Staff Meeting at 9:30 a.m. on

Mondays. This meeting lasts anywhere from twenty to thirty minutes. During this meeting, the leaders of the Command Staff, including the sheriff, chief deputy, mayor, and chief clerk. Also, the patrol, investigations, and detention center captains will attend. Before the sheriff and these individuals discuss official business, he will call on the chaplain to lead in a devotional and prayer. When new chaplains participate in this meeting for the first time, the researcher who serves as the lead chaplain will also be there. He will introduce the chaplain to the group and express how he is looking forward to serving with this person and the asset they will be to the chaplaincy ministry. Once the meeting is over, the lead chaplain will walk with this newest member and introduce him to key leaders in dispatch, investigations, victim services, detention center, administration, and the ladies in the lobby who greet all guests. The lead chaplain will instruct the new chaplain to use Monday, when their on-call schedule begins, to visit all the divisions housed at the CCSO before they leave. This is an excellent time to stop by these divisions, thank everyone for their hard work, and ask if there are any prayer requests or special needs that the chaplaincy division can meet. Often, ministry opportunities develop because of this simple act. If time permits, chaplains are asked to visit dispatch and be paired with a patrol deputy to conduct a ride-along. If not, the chaplain can do this at another time.

Upon completing their three-month probation period, the prospective chaplain will officially become a CCSO Chaplain. They will then be fitted for their shirt size by Captain Rex Sorrow and given one short and long-sleeved shirt. A jacket and badge will also be ordered, and the appropriate personnel will make an ID card. Chaplains are instructed to wear these items when conducting business or representing the CCSO.

Deputies

Following the chaplaincy training, another Likert scale will be emailed to those involved in this project (Appendix U). The majority of questions will mirror the first scale. Deputies will be asked to complete the Likert scale and email it back to the researcher before their second interview is conducted. By receiving the completed Likert scale before the second interview, the researcher will have time to formulate questions to dig deeper into the deputy's responses. Before the interview begins, the researcher will thank the deputy for the time invested and request that they continue to be as honest as possible. This researcher is hopeful that by comparing the scale findings and interviewing the deputies again, he will see a pattern of improvement and discover where attention still needs to be placed.

Focus Group

Before the final post-training interview with the command staff occurs, a second set of questions will be emailed to all four participants (Appendix P). The researcher is hopeful that by giving the participants time to process the questions before the interview, meaningful discussion will take place. Before answering the questions, the researcher will remind these individuals to be truthful. If honesty is not used, the results of this project will be flawed. This interview will help determine how the chaplaincy ministry moves forward by addressing the needs of deputies and office personnel.

Data Analysis

The seventh step is to analyze the data collected. After completing all post-training interviews, the researcher will transcribe and compare them to those conducted before the training. In addition, all interview questions completed will be evaluated. The researcher will

analyze the answers to identify recurring themes during this process. He will then use these themes as a baseline to proceed with his project.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The researcher executed the seven steps of the intervention design. Each step proceeded from the IRB approval, the chaplain training sessions, pre- and post-training interviews, and the themes identified in these interviews. This researcher gained much insight from this thesis project, and he prays it will offer the same to agencies wishing to implement a chaplaincy ministry.

Approval and Chaplain Recruitment

Once IRB approval (see IRB Approval Letter) was granted, the researcher presented his desire to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO to Sheriff Matt Gentry. To get his plan in motion, the researcher emailed the sheriff to explain the purpose and plan for his research project (Appendix A). A few days later, he met with the sheriff at the CCSO to discuss his plan further. The sheriff showed great excitement and pledged his support by signing a permission form (Appendix B). Upon receiving this approval, the researcher contacted three lead chaplains in Alabama who currently serve in law enforcement agencies. Understanding that they could offer great insight into establishing a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO, he emailed them a consent form before they were interviewed. The next group recruited were prospective CCSO chaplains. The researcher emailed thirty-five pastors sharing the need for chaplains to serve at the sheriff's office and included a consent form. Six pastors responded and emailed signed consent forms to the researcher within seven days. Furthermore, four deputies the researcher spoke to signed consent forms and expressed their desire to explore the possibility of

fulfilling both roles as deputy and chaplain. Each of these deputies serves as a bi-vocational pastor.

Deputy Recruitment

The researcher emailed fourteen deputies who have served at least six years at the CCSO. These deputies were informed of the researcher's thesis project. The researcher communicated he was seeking their involvement in helping him develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry. Of the fourteen deputies contacted, seven agreed to assist the researcher. Included in this email was a consent form (Appendix J) and a list of questions (Appendix K) to be asked during an upcoming interview.

Chaplain Pre-Training Interviews

After receiving signed consent forms from ten prospective chaplains, the researcher scheduled interviews with each individual. Before conducting these interviews, the researcher emailed the prospective chaplains a list of questions they would be asked in a future interview. All participants were encouraged to read over the questions (Appendix H) and develop their answers to prepare for their interview. These ten interviews took place at the researcher's church office, and one hour was allotted for each. All interviews were recorded onto a password-protected external hard drive. After completing these interviews, they were transcribed by the researcher.

Deputy Pre-Training Interviews

The researcher interviewed seven deputies after receiving consent forms from each one. Before conducting these interviews, the researcher emailed each deputy a list of eleven questions (Appendix K) to be discussed during the interview. Deputies were instructed to read over the

questions to be adequately prepared for the interview. Most of the seven interviews occurred in a coffee shop in the researcher's church. Other interviews took place at other convenient locations. All interviews were recorded onto a password-protected external hard drive. After completing these interviews, they were transcribed by the researcher.

Chaplain Training

All ten prospective chaplains attended a chaplaincy training taught by the researcher on June 6, 2023. This training was held in the CCSO Training Center. The training began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded at 2 p.m. The CCSO provided sausage biscuits, coffee, and orange juice. After breakfast, they were seated at the tables for the training. The researcher then introduced Sheriff Matt Gentry. The sheriff expressed his gratitude toward each prospective chaplain and for this researcher providing the chaplaincy training. After the sheriff shared, the researcher opened with prayer and taught the curriculum (Appendix Q).

The purpose of the chaplaincy training was to introduce law enforcement chaplaincy. This was accomplished through the four sessions taught by the researcher. The theological framework laid out in the Old and New Testaments for chaplaincy ministry was discussed during the first session. Then, the origin of law enforcement chaplaincy in the US was introduced. Afterward, the personal struggles deputies battle and the need for a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO were shared. In the second session, participants were challenged to conduct ride-alongs to see what deputies deal with daily. At the end of this session, everyone participated in role-playing. Despite not being planned, following the ride-along role-playing exercise, two deputies who participated in the training asked if they could share the importance of ride-alongs and the ministry opportunities they provide. The deputy's testimonies also emphasized the significance of chaplains dedicating time to accompany them during their duties.

This experience was enlightening and one of the most memorable aspects of this session. Therefore, ride-along testimonies by deputies will be included in future training sessions. The third session discussed how to deliver a death notification successfully. Chaplains were also taught many dos and do nots of providing such notices. This session ended with various role-playing situations of death notifications chaplains may have to perform. Before the final session, lunch was served, and the researcher gave an overview of all seven divisions within the sheriff's office. After the teaching time, chaplains were taken on a tour of the CCSO and introduced to each division's supervisors. Once the tour was completed, everyone met in the training center and were given a survey to provide feedback about the chaplaincy training.

Chaplain Post-Training Interviews

The researcher scheduled interviews with each chaplain who completed the chaplaincy training. At the end of this training, chaplains were given a list of questions (Appendix R). They were instructed to study the questions so meaningful discussion could occur during their final interview. The post-training interviews were held at the researcher's church office and lasted one hour. Each interview was recorded onto a password-protected external hard drive. Once the interviews were finished, they were transcribed by the researcher. A copy of this transcription was sent to the chaplain so that the accuracy of the transcription could be checked. If errors were found, chaplains were asked to make necessary changes before returning the transcription to the researcher.

Deputy Post-Training Interviews

The researcher scheduled interviews with seven deputies who have served at least six years at the CCSO and represent all seven divisions. Before these interviews, deputies were

emailed a post-training rating scale and a list of five questions to be asked during the post-training interview (Appendix U and W). Deputies were encouraged to study the questions and to come prepared to answer them during the final meeting. Most of these interviews were held in a coffee shop at the researcher's church. However, others took place at a more convenient location for the deputy. Each interview lasted one hour and was recorded onto a password-protected external hard drive. Once the interviews were finished, they were transcribed by the researcher. A copy of this transcription was sent to the deputy so the accuracy of the transcription could be checked. If errors were found, deputies were asked to make necessary changes before returning the transcription to the researcher.

Focus Group Post-Training Interview

Before the final post-training interview with the command staff occurs, a second list of questions will be emailed to all four participants (Appendix P). Before answering the questions, the researcher will remind these individuals to be truthful as they complete their scale. After all, if honesty is not used, the results of this project will be flawed. Anticipating that the questions will be answered honestly, the researcher will use the interviewees' responses to gauge the success of his thesis project. In addition, this interview will help determine how the chaplaincy ministry moves forward by addressing the needs of deputies and office personnel.

Data Analysis and Determine Themes

After transcribing the interviews with chaplains and deputies, the researcher searched for recurring themes. Data Triangulation was used to establish the validity of this process. According to Tim Sensing, three analytical frames of reference will arise by triangulating the

data: the perspective of an insider, the perspective of an outsider, and personal perspective.⁷ The researcher noted several themes from the interviews with the chaplains and deputies. This data was then shared with a certified ICPC chaplain who creates chaplaincy training material and a faculty mentor outsider for review. The recurring themes discovered throughout this process will be discussed in Chapter Four.

⁷ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The data for this research was gathered by conducting qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Qualitative research was performed through in-depth interviews, and quantitative research was completed using Likert scales. “Likert scales allow researchers to collect quantitative estimates of subjective traits, producing numeric data that can be summarized and visualized.”¹

The project aimed to develop a robust chaplaincy ministry by equipping local pastors to serve as chaplains at the Cullman County Sheriff’s Office, seeking to address the problem of deputies’ emotional, physical, and spiritual needs not being met. To help address these concerns, this researcher conducted interviews with four different groups. These groups consisted of chaplains currently serving in lead roles in Alabama law enforcement agencies, prospective chaplains, current CCSO Deputies with at least six years of experience, and a focus group comprised of the Command Staff Leadership. The researcher employed pseudonyms as substitutes for the actual names of the interviewees. The analysis and synthesis of the results were conducted by examining the responses provided by the prospective chaplains and deputies during the interviews. In this action research project, ten local pastors, four of whom are also CCSO Deputies, voluntarily participated in the chaplaincy training taught by the researcher and devoted time to praying about their potential role as chaplains. Upon completing the training and praying, all ten individuals pledged to serve. These chaplains consist of eight males and two females, ages 32 to 67.

¹ South, Laura, David Saffo, Olga Vitek, Cody Dunne, and Michelle A. Borkin, “Effective use of Likert Scales in Visualization Evaluations: A Systematic Review,” *Computer Graphics Forum* 41, no. 3 (2022): 43.

Before interviewing the prospective chaplains and CCSO Deputies, three law enforcement chaplain leaders serving in Alabama were interviewed. This group supported the researcher in gaining valuable knowledge about organizing an effective chaplaincy ministry to address unmet needs. Each chaplain provided a slightly different perspective on the basics of law enforcement chaplaincy.

The second group interviewed were six full-time Cullman County pastors from various denominations who wished to serve as chaplains. The following churches are represented: Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Church of God, Methodist, Nazarene, Pentecostal, and non-denominational. In addition, four CCSO deputies who fall under these denominations and serve as bi-vocational pastors were interviewed. These individuals shared their ministry experience and why they desire to serve.

The next group interviewed were seven current CCSO deputies representing the different sheriff's office divisions. Deputies interviewed have served at least six years at the CCSO. These individuals provided the researcher with valuable information on the current unmet needs within the CCSO that chaplains can help meet. The time spent with these participants also gave them ownership of the process, which will further enhance the development of our chaplaincy ministry and motivate them to utilize its services.²

The final group interviewed was a focus group comprised of the sheriff, chief deputy, major, and chief clerk. This meeting ensured the researcher that the leadership has a pulse on the needs of their staff. He was also encouraged by the command staff's willingness to offer solutions to the deputies' struggles and their trust in our chaplains to address the needs of those serving at the CCSO.

² Stringer, *Action Research*, 77

The researcher interviewed deputies to ascertain their unfulfilled needs and determine how the chaplaincy ministry can address them. During this process, The researcher also learned why they chose to serve in law enforcement. After completing the transcription of the interviews, the researcher proceeded to identify recurring themes. The subsequent themes were apparent: serving, stressors, trust, and relationships.

Theme 1: Serving

Realizing the underlying factors that drive an individual to choose a profession impacts their level of service. It may also affect their emotional, spiritual, and physical health. The level of motivation a law enforcement officer exhibits directly influences dedication to their agency and community. Participant interviews reveal that numerous officers were attracted to a career in law enforcement because they felt a genuine sense of calling and obligation to help people. Reflections from participant interviews support that deputies who enter law enforcement out of a calling to serve others experience more job satisfaction and better manage work-related stress.

The initial theme identified during the interviews was the concept of serving. This theme surfaced from the question, “why did you choose to get involved in law enforcement?” Deputies and prospective chaplains expressed their willingness to be involved in law enforcement due to their desire to serve others and God.

Serving: Deputy’s Perspective

Deputy Byrd expressed he pursued a law enforcement career due to God’s divine calling to serve his city: “There’s no doubt in my mind that the Lord called me to serve Him in law enforcement. Not one person in my family has ever served in this profession, but I was strongly convinced that it was the path God intended for me to pursue. At first, I resisted God’s calling,

but that all changed one spring day.” Byrd recounted a morning following a period of earnest prayer and a strong desire for God’s will to be fulfilled in his life; he read Romans 13 in his daily New Testament devotional routine. Later that day, Deputy Byrd surrendered to God’s calling to serve him in law enforcement. On this, Byrd noted, “As I began reading in verse three and then onto verse four, it was like the lights came on, and I realized more than ever the tugging on my heart to serve the Lord by serving others, and I applied for a job at the police department that week.”

When Deputy Petty was asked, “Why he pursued a law enforcement career?” he shared his upbringing and how he realized the difference he could make by serving his city, “I grew up in the hood or what some might call the projects or ghetto.” Petty shared how he and his family had financial difficulties, “Like everyone else, we were poor as dirt. My friends either stole stuff or sold street candy to make money.” He continued, “Drugs were available to anyone who wanted them, and many of my childhood friends turned to them and gangs to find their identity.” Petty shared how his godly grandmother, who raised him, challenged him to rise above his circumstances and pursue a higher calling. She told him one day, “Sunshine, God’s got great plans for you, but it’s your choice. You can either follow Him or follow this crazy world. If you follow this world, you’ll end up dead like your brother, but if you follow the Lord, watch out cuz you gonna do something special!” Petty said he surrendered to the ministry at age nineteen and began serving as a ministry associate in his church youth group. At age twenty-one, he applied at the Birmingham Police Department and was hired and sent to the police academy in Selma, Alabama. He said, “I chose the career of a police officer so I could serve my Lord and Savior and community by making a positive influence on kids’ lives in my old hood.” Christian law enforcement personnel “Conceptualize policing as a divinely appointed role for the protection of

the social order against chaos and evil.”³ When law enforcement officers like Deputy Petty choose to be involved in their communities, it enables them to build trusting relationships with individuals. Healthy relationships are crucial in minority neighborhoods because “Mistrust of the police is higher in communities of color, especially communities with larger numbers of black residents.”⁴ Enhancing public confidence in law enforcement encourages collaboration and cooperation, which empowers police to perform their job.⁵ These factors are crucial and aid in decreasing crime rates and enhancing community safety.

Deputy Moore was surrounded by law enforcement his entire life. His father and grandfather served as police officers in his hometown. He said, “Both my dad and grandfather modeled a life of servanthood my whole life by serving at our town’s PD.” Moore saw the difference these men had on others and decided at an early age to pursue a law enforcement career. He shared, “I believe I was destined to become a cop. Protecting and serving others is in my blood. I don’t know anything different.” Deputy Moore said, “When I get discouraged and question why I do what I do, I just remember it’s not about me but about serving others.” Moore’s servant leadership style needs to be fostered as it can positively influence others. “Servant leadership fosters an environment conducive to growth through a process of nurture and support, thus helping followers mature beyond what was initially thought possible.”⁶ This

³ Aaron Griffith, “Policing is a Profession of the Heart’: Evangelicalism and Modern American Policing,” *Religions* 12, no. 3 (2021): 2.

⁴ Anthony A. Braga, Rod K. Brunson, and Kevin M. Drakulich, “Race, Place, and Effective Policing,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2019): 540.

⁵ Medareshaw Tafesse Melkamu, and Woldeab Teshome, “Public Trust in the Police: Investigating the Influence of Police Performance, Procedural Fairness, and Police-Community Relations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,” *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2023): 3.

⁶ Paul M. Yang, “Servant Leadership: The Impact on Employee Job Satisfaction in Law Enforcement,” *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics* 20, no. 4 (2023): 2.

attitude has served Moore well because he can navigate through the difficulty of his work positively and continue serving those, he took an oath to serve.

When deputies Harlon and Hurley were asked why they chose to pursue law enforcement, they conveyed that they were drawn to the excitement of serving in this field. Harlon stated, “What other job can ya have that in the morning ya help a senior adult put groceries in their car and in the afternoon be involved in a 10–100 (high-speed chase).” Hurley stated, “It’s a crazy profession. One minute, you’re serving by speaking to kids in a school gym about making good decisions, and then the next thing you know, you’re responding to a robbery.”

Deputy Phillips shared that he was initially drawn to law enforcement because of the thrill of chasing bad guys. Phillips shared, “I’ve always enjoyed putting bullies in their place. Growing up, most fights I was in stemmed from confronting people who were picking on kids smaller than them. Law enforcement was enticing because you get paid to fight.” He later said that after his first year of working at the CCSO, he learned that “policing is more about serving than getting into fistfights.”

Deputy Dube grew up fascinated by police officers. His neighbor was a state trooper and often shared his experiences with Dube when he was a teenager. He said, “I could see myself wearing that uniform and shiny badge driving a Crown Vic with lights on and siren blasting.” At age twenty, his neighbor encouraged him to pursue law enforcement, but Dube feared that his ADHD would disqualify him from this field. He would later learn that this condition would not hinder him. Although Dube did not pursue a career as a trooper, he was hired at the CCSO at twenty years old. Dube said, “I was so ecstatic to hear that my ADHD wouldn’t stop me from serving as a deputy and that I could help people that need help.” A survey of police officers with

ADHD showed “helping others as the primary driver for their career direction.”⁷ When asked if he liked serving at the sheriff’s office, he said, “No, I love it and wouldn’t trade this job for anything else.” Although he enjoys his work, he did convey the need to be able to talk with someone he trusts concerning the difficulties of serving in law enforcement.

The researcher taught an introductory training course to equip chaplains to understand the challenges of law enforcement so that they can serve alongside deputies as encouragers and help minister to their needs. Deputy Byrd expressed how the training has made a difference at the CCSO, “Chaplains are much more visible than ever before.” Although Byrd is grounded in his faith, he shared how he has been encouraged by the chaplain ministry. Recently, he was running radar on Childhaven Road, and a chaplain pulled up beside him. They talked for about ten minutes, but what meant the most was the prayer the chaplain prayed before he drove away. Byrd said, “I was just having a bad day, and just at the right time, God lifted my spirits through a chaplain’s presence and prayer.” Byrd also shared that he believes other deputies have noticed how involved the chaplains have been in the last several months and that deputies seem more comfortable around them. He encouraged the researcher by saying, “The changes I’ve seen in the chaplaincy ministry are going to open a lot of doors for ministry to take place.”

⁷ Samuel J. Tromans et al., “A Survey of the Workplace Experiences of Police Force Employees Who are Autistic and/or have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,” *BJPsych Open* 9, no. 4 (2023): 7.

Serving: Chaplain's Perspective

One chaplain named Sonny, who completed the chaplaincy training, elaborated on the importance of being the hands and feet of Jesus to the CCSO deputies. Having served as an Air Force Chaplain and a law enforcement chaplain at another agency before moving to Cullman, he realizes the importance of going to deputies where they are instead of waiting for them to come to you. He said, "You'll be waiting a long time for one of them to come to you; we must follow Christ's example and meet them at their place of need." Chaplain Sonny's personality is what some refer to as a proactive one. A recent study that analyzed data collected from individuals employed at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights found that proactive personalities are "valuable to organizations because they will be characterized as individuals who find chances to shape an environment by taking personal initiative to create a favorable environment."⁸ This mentality can be beneficial in serving others at the CCSO, as positive energy is encouraging and contagious.

Ben conveyed that he desired to serve as a chaplain because it is a great way to conduct ministry outside the four walls of the church. He said, "I learned through our recent training how much these guys face and the need for someone like me to serve beside them." Ben believes he can be an encourager by making himself available and building relationships with deputies.

Another chaplain named Frank said when he heard at a pastor's luncheon that the CCSO needed chaplains, he began praying about serving. He did not have to pray long before realizing God was giving him an opportunity. Frank said, "I tell my church to look for needs, and look to

⁸ Yuzy Prila Adhyke et al., "Hear Me Out! this is My Idea: Transformational Leadership, Proactive Personality and Relational Identification," *SAGE Open* 13, no. 1 (2023): 215824402211458.

see where God is at work and then go be a part of what He's doing." He further shared his desire to serve God through this ministry.

Nick shared his excitement about serving by conveying that he could not think of a better way to make a difference in his community. "This summer, I preached a sermon on the impact of serving in and outside of the church." After being contacted by the researcher to pray about being a chaplain, he thought of every excuse as to why he could not serve. However, after seeking the Lord, he knew this ministry was for him. He said, "I just preached on serving outside the church, and now I'm asked to be a CCSO chaplain. Wow! How could I say no? You are talking about having to practice what you preach. Man, I really am thankful for this opportunity and couldn't think of a better way to serve God and this community."

Jim was interested in serving but was not sure if he could volunteer the required time. After attending the chaplaincy training, he was determined to rearrange his priorities and serve in this capacity. Armed with the knowledge he gained from the training, he declared, "After gaining a better understanding of the challenges facing law enforcement and hearing those two deputies share of the need for chaplains to serve, I was hooked." Jim shared that the training gave him confidence and was the determining factor for agreeing to serve as a chaplain.

With visible concern, chaplain Seth admitted, "At first, it didn't seem feasible to serve at this time with all that's going on at the school and parish. I figured I'd wait awhile and then get plugged in." Seth shared that the chaplaincy training reminded him there's a great need for law enforcement chaplains. He said, "Your training made me realize I needed to clean some things off my plate to make room for this. I enjoy Chaplaincy, and I'm excited about having this opportunity."

Dave, Lawrence, Bridget, and Chantal serve as full-time deputies and bi-vocational ministers. All four have a desire to serve their fellow deputies. Lawrence said he volunteered because “There will be times when deputies need to talk to a deputy who’s a believer and walks in their shoes.” Bridget said, “Our female deputies need to have a female chaplain serving so they have someone who identifies with them.” She shared that since the chaplaincy training, a female deputy in the Detention Center talked about the pain of a recent miscarriage. Bridget had also experienced the heartache of a miscarriage and was able to offer support and encouragement by ministering to this deputy’s emotional needs. Clare Bellhouse with BMC Women’s Health noted, “Many studies have reported that for most women, speaking to other women who have experienced miscarriage themselves was the most helpful support they received, as they often felt that these women understood their experience more fully.”⁹ Bridget feels that she and this deputy have created a special bond because they share an unfortunate experience. She said, “I knew God would use my miscarriage for His glory, but I never imagined it would be this way. God is good!” Chantal has served as an unofficial chaplain for quite some time. She said, “I’ve always looked at myself as a chaplain to our female deputies, but after the training, I knew I wanted to officially serve in this way.” Dave said, “I knew there was more for me to do, and this training showed me that it was serving as a chaplain. I’ve built healthy relationships with the guys and look forward to taking them to a new level.”

Since the chaplaincy training has been taught, the researcher has identified signs suggesting that deputies’ spiritual and emotional needs are being met. Many deputies will now call or text a chaplain with a prayer request. Almost weekly, chaplains are asked to pray about

⁹ Clare Bellhouse, Meredith J. Temple-Smith, and Jade E. Bilardi, “It’s just One of those People Don’t Seem to Talk About,” Women’s Experiences of Social Support Following Miscarriage: A Qualitative Study,” *BMC Women’s Health* 18, no. 1 (2018): 2.

specific needs. Recently, a deputy texted a chaplain saying, “You’re always encouraging me, so I thought I’d check on you. How are things going? Thanks for all you do!” These are strong indicators that the chaplains are being used to help meet deputies’ spiritual and emotional needs. Although these are only a few indications of improvement, the researcher remains optimistic and posits that chaplains will play a significant role in meeting deputies’ emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. By serving alongside them and offering support, chaplains can assist deputies in navigating work-related and personal stressors.

Theme 2: Stressors

A second theme that emerged in the interviews is stressors. Deputies openly shared various manifestations of stress. A research investigation that explored the correlation between job stressors and the well-being of police officers revealed that “police officers represent an employee group that is especially vulnerable to workplace stress due to high job demands. Since police work is considered a particularly stressful occupation, police officers are regarded as being at high risk for reduced well-being in terms of mental health problems.”¹⁰ The high stress levels resulting from the rigorous demands of law enforcement may also cause many to experience discouragement and prompt them to leave their profession prematurely. Furthermore, police officers experiencing heightened stress levels may develop “Metabolic Syndrome,” a potentially life-threatening condition characterized by the presence of at least three of the following: abdominal issues, high blood pressure, elevated triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein

¹⁰ Christine Wolter et al., “Job Demands, Job Resources, and Well-being in Police Officers—a Resource-Oriented Approach,” *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 34, no. 1 (2019): 45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-018-9265-1>.

levels, and high blood sugar.¹¹ The stressors mentioned in the interviews ranged from a shortage of deputies, time away from family, overtime demands, inadequate compensation, work following deputies home, and critical incidents.

Stressors: Deputy's Perspective

The lack of sufficient deputies during high call volumes adds unnecessary stress and takes its toll on Deputy Harlon. He shared, "There are times when my radio doesn't get a break. Calls are coming in one after the other. Although Sgt. is good at prioritizing calls, we still need more deputies on the road. Hey, if you don't have enough help, you can't do your job, and that's what stresses me out. Emergencies don't stop just because your shift is short-handed."

The primary cause of burnout and increased workload for deputies is frequently a lack of adequate personnel during patrol shifts. "This can wear on officers over time, resulting in some officers leaving the job to escape the high workload."¹²

Missing out on his kid's special events causes Deputy Moore to get stressed and discouraged. He remembers how upset he got when his dad, who also worked as a police officer, missed many significant moments in his life. With a heavy heart, he said, "When my son was born, I told my wife, I'm never going to miss a ballgame or school event because of work. Man, have I had to eat those words. I know that comes with working the night shift, but it sure does suck. That's one of the worst things about this job." Moore reported that since the chaplaincy training, one chaplain had accompanied him on multiple ride-alongs, providing support and encouragement. He said, "Chaplain Sonny has been a great encourager; he knows what it's like

¹¹ Sergio Garbarino and Nicola Magnavita, "Work Stress and Metabolic Syndrome in Police Officers. A Prospective Study," *PloS One* 10, no. 12 (2015): 2.

¹² Brad W. Smith, Jennifer Wareham, and Eric G. Lambert, "Community and Organizational Influences on Voluntary Turnover in Law Enforcement," *Journal of Crime & Justice* 37, no. 3 (2014): 382.

to miss out on your kid's stuff. He told me that he missed too many of his kids' after-school events as a pastor because of church work. I know it's strange, but just hearing that made me feel better and relieved some of my guilt." Chaplain Sonny also prayed with Deputy Moore about this stressor and encouraged him to talk with his supervisor to see if he could stop by some of his son's basketball games while on duty. Moore said, "To my surprise, my supervisor was supportive. On a good day, I get to watch about half of a game. You know, that's important to my boy, but it means so much to me." Moore shared that watching some of his son's games while on duty has lowered his stress level. He said, "That chaplain's prayer and words of wisdom have helped me more than you could ever imagine."

Deputy Hurley conveyed during his interview that overtime demands, in addition to twelve-hour shifts, are a stress factor for him. Hurley said, "Don't get me wrong, the extra money helps, but working so much overtime stresses me, my wife, and my kids. Sometimes, I feel like I'm not much of a husband or father." Hurley also mentioned that the lack of sleep he gets not only affects his alertness but also adds to his stress and anxiety. "I know guys who brag about only getting four hours of sleep each night. It's like a badge of honor for them. That's ridiculous! But I'm telling you, if I don't get at least six hours of sleep, I won't handle this job well." Southwest Minnesota State Professor of Psychology Scott Peterson noted, "Short sleep and sleepiness are common stressors among police."¹³ A study showed, "Fifty-one percent of police officers report bad sleep quality. Sleep problems have been associated with night and evening work schedules or abnormal work hours."¹⁴

¹³ Scott Peterson et al., "Associations between Shift Work Characteristics, Shift Work Schedules, Sleep and Burnout in North American Police Officers: A Cross-Sectional Study," *BMJ Open* 9, no. 11 (2019): 2.

¹⁴ Sergio Garbarino and Nicola Magnavita, "Sleep Problems are a Strong Predictor of Stress Related Metabolic Changes in Police Officers, A Prospective Study," *PloS One* 14, no. 10 (2019):13.

Inadequate compensation causes stress for Deputy Phillips. He said with a heart of gratitude, “Although the Sheriff and County Commission have recently given us raises, and I am thankful for that, but I ain’t kidding; it’s tough to make ends meet.” Phillips continued by talking about getting a second job to work on his off days but noted that sometimes he’s scheduled to appear in court on these days, which compounds his stress levels. He said, “So I guess I’ve got to manage the money I have more responsibly. Lord knows I’ve struggled with that for a long time.” Deputy Phillips talked about recently learning of Financial Peace University being taught at a church pastored by one of the CCSO chaplains. Phillips said, “Not long ago, Chaplain Frank spent about four hours with me. The call volume was down, so we were able to talk quite a bit. He encouraged me to attend a faith-based financial program offered at his church.” With a smile, Phillips said, “I was skeptical at first, but I’m glad Markie and I are going through this class. It’s changed the way we spend our money. I’m not buying things I don’t need anymore online, and I’m brown bagging it instead of always eating fast food while on duty.” Recently, Phillips has been encouraged and spoke about feeling better about his financial situation and waistline since he’s no longer eating out. He said, “I’m not as stretched financially, and my uniform fits better too.” Phillips continued, “This budget thing is absolutely making a difference.” “Budgeting and weight control require discipline, motivation, and sacrifice,” but the results can be life-changing and alleviate undesired stress.¹⁵

Despite deputies’ efforts to escape the stress caused by their law enforcement duties, a neighbor may approach them seeking assistance. Deputy Petty lamented that work tends to follow him home. “I get paid to work a twelve-hour shift, but sometimes I’m asked to work from

¹⁵ Barbara O’Neill, Jing Jian Xiao, and Karen Ensle, “Positive Health and Financial Practices: Does Budgeting make a Difference?” *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* 109, no. 2 (2017): 35.

home without compensation.” He clarified his statement by saying that people in his apartment complex sometimes knock on his door and request help. Recently, a concerned woman knocked on his door. Upon opening his door, she said, “I know you’re off duty, but a tall white man wearing a black trench coat is standing by my car. Do you mind checking him out?” Although Petty is glad to help people, such actions do not allow him to recover and rest from his work. Recovery from labor is advantageous for physical and mental well-being.¹⁶ Brandon W. Smit, Assistant Professor of the Department of Management at Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts, notes, “Detaching from work, defined as mentally and physically disengaging from work during off-hours, is an important prerequisite to effective daily recovery and psychological well-being.”¹⁷ Deputies must relax and disassociate from their work to remove stressors, even if this means politely asking people to call the sheriff’s office for an on-duty deputy to respond to their concerns.

The critical incidents Deputy Byrd has experienced have contributed to a heightened level of stress and the fear of battling (PTSD) in the future. “Cumulative exposure to traumatic events is significantly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder.”¹⁸ He shared that as a traffic homicide investigator, “I have seen things that nobody should ever have to see.” Byrd continued by revisiting an accident he responded to on I-65 South one evening, “As I looked at the lifeless bodies in this car, what hit me the hardest was the little boy in the back seat. He was strapped in his car seat but had been decapitated. In his right hand, clenched in his fist, was a red firetruck.

¹⁶ Laurens Bujold Steed et al., “Leaving Work at Work: A Meta-Analysis on Employee Recovery from Work,” *Journal of Management* 47, no. 4 (2021): 890.

¹⁷ Brandon W. Smit, “Successfully Leaving Work at Work: The Self-regulatory Underpinnings of Psychological Detachment,” *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 89, no. 3 (2016): 493.

¹⁸ Lupo Alman Geronazzo et al, “Cumulative Exposure to Work-Related Traumatic Events and Current Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in New York City’s First Responders,” *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 74, (2016; 2017;): 134.

All I could see was my son, who was about the same age, holding onto that firetruck.” With tears in his eyes, Byrd lamented, “Man, I will never forget that scene.” “Calls involving children can be particularly tough, especially when the victim resembles the officer’s own child in any way: age, body type, hair color, clothing, and so on.”¹⁹ Byrd later stated that he prayed that this event and others would not cause PTSD in the future. The American Psychiatric Association reported that “PTSD is triggered by experiencing or witnessing a terrifying event (including critical incidents). It is a mental health condition that causes impairment in functioning across several domains of life.”²⁰ It has been reported that a small percentage of the public who have experienced a critical incident will suffer from PTSD for the rest of their lives. However, because they encounter more traumatic events than the public, the lifetime prevalence of PTSD in law enforcement officers is from “15% to 24%.”²¹

Deputy Byrd also shared that a murder-suicide involving a CCSO deputy and dispatcher, Lexie White, was something that deeply disturbed him. Not only did he deal with the senseless death of two co-workers, but he was disappointed in how some of his colleagues handled this unfortunate situation. It was enlightening to hear Byrd’s revelation as he proclaimed, “This is something that the academy and experience don’t prepare you for. But the way some people went about this was unbelievable. People I know who identify as Christians didn’t act too Christlike.” He continued by sharing, “It was my God-given calling to law enforcement that motivated me during this dark moment. I also have begun to respect many of our chaplains who

¹⁹ Ellen Kirschman, Mark Kamena, and Joel Fay, *Counseling Cops: What Clinicians Need to Know* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2014), 56.

²⁰ Erica Fuller, Grace M. Boland, and Temilola Salami, “The Impact of Critical Incidents, Work Stress, and Organizational Support on PTSD Symptoms among Law Enforcement Officers: A Moderated Moderation Model,” *Police Practice & Research*, ahead-of-print, no. ahead-of-print (2023): 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

made themselves available after this went down.” Byrd also acknowledged that the concentrated effort of the sheriff’s office chaplains that began in the summer after the researcher’s training paved the way for meaningful ministry after these two deaths. Byrd said, “I don’t know if we understood the need for chaplains until this tragedy. I know y’all have ministered to me and several others. If the tragic events I’ve experienced ever come back to haunt me, I know I can count on you and at least a handful of other chaplains and know they’re going to be there.”

The calls that Deputy Dube has responded to since being a deputy have contributed to his stress. He said, “I try my best not to take my work home with me. Typically, at the end of my shift, I’ll talk to my guys to get things off my mind. That way, I don’t suffer from diarrhea of the mouth when I get home. I need that outlet, and talking to them helps. There’re just some things that my wife doesn’t need to know.” Dube continued by sharing a heart-breaking incident involving a mother stabbing both of her children to death. This event shook Dube to his core. Jason Roach, professor of Psychology and Policing at the University of Huddersfield, UK, wrote: “The death of a child is without the doubt one of the most distressing events imaginable, when it occurs in suspicious circumstances, such as at the hand of a parent or close family member, its effects are often more acute and incomprehensible.”²² Following this double homicide, Dube shared that he drank more than his usual two beers after work. He talked about how he needed something to provide immediate relief and that alcohol is what he turns to when things are too difficult to handle. Unfortunately, many police officers address stress by turning to the maladaptive coping practice of alcohol. “Alcohol was cited as one of the primary coping strategies of police officers in dealing with work-related stressors. The police subculture

²² Jason Roach, Ashley Cartwright, and Kathryn Sharratt, “Dealing with the Unthinkable: A Study of the Cognitive and Emotional Stress of Adult and Child Homicide Investigations on Police Investigators,” *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 32, no. 3 (08, 2017): 251.

encourages the use of alcohol; in many instances, drinking is expected by colleagues, and there is significant social pressure to conform.”²³

Stressors: Chaplain’s Perspective

Critical incidents can cause stress upon law enforcement personnel and the need for chaplains to respond during these times. Following a murder-suicide, chaplain Nick discovered that his mere presence, as much as his verbal consolation, offered solace for the ladies working in dispatch. Several hours after this tragic event, Nick drove to the sheriff’s office and spent nearly an hour with the ladies who worked with Lexie, a dispatcher who was murdered. He said, “As I sat beside one of the ladies, she was stressed to the max trying to process things while grieving; she hadn’t said more than ten words. But occasionally, she’d stretch out her hand to touch mine to see if I was still there. I knew then my presence was felt while sitting there, not saying hardly anything myself.” The ladies Nick ministered to were stressed and heartbroken beyond measure, but his presence made a difference that day. Nick said, “I know working in Dispatch is already stressful, so I’m glad I could help relieve some of that and the heartache these ladies were experiencing.” He also noted that he first learned of the ministry of presence during the chaplaincy training day. Nick said, “When we discussed the ministry of presence in our training, I remember thinking just being a presence and not talking won’t help anybody, wrong.” Nick’s experience with the dispatchers following this tragic event highlighted the significance of the ministry of presence and how his mere presence aided others in coping with work-related stressors. He now intentionally makes a point to visit dispatch, even if it is briefly and he is not on-call.

²³ Kim S. Ménard, and Michael L. Arter, “Stress, Coping, Alcohol Use, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among an International Sample of Police Officers: Does Gender Matter?” *Police Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (2014): 310.

Chaplain Dave discussed how he copes with the stress factors of his job at the sheriff's office, church, and role as a chaplain. Dave explained his ability to discern the deputies' stress levels based on their demeanor during the shift. Some on his shift get stressed when they have a shortage of deputies, "I tell them you've got to pray and seek God's strength. This job is bigger than all of us, so we've got to rely upon the Lord." He gives his colleagues the advice he presents to himself when stressed over work and prays with his shift.

The temptation to be stressed over deputies' pay is not foreign to Chaplain Lawrence, "I know the challenges of making it on our income. When guys start bellyaching over their pay, one of the things I ask is, are you giving back to the Lord?" Sometimes, Lawrence must explain what tithing is, but more often than not, deputies know the meaning. He does not hesitate to tell them their financial burdens can be attributed to not following God's plan for biblical financial stewardship. Lawrence's tactic may come across as harsh, but he is known for telling people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear, and this has gained him respect among his peers. Authenticity is a crucial characteristic of genuine empathy. Being authentic entails "Acknowledging one's own vulnerability and fallibility; this entails being real, honest, and sincere."²⁴ Lawrence also prays with deputies and offers other practical advice since many deputies do not regularly attend church.

Recognizing the stressors that accompany law enforcement careers, Chaplain Bridget, who concurrently holds the position of deputy, realizes the stressors that accompany her peers. Bridget explained that as a deputy, she knows the challenges that female deputies who are moms face. She lamented, "I understand the overwhelming stress and pain these ladies go through

²⁴ Jolanda Van Dijke et al., "Genuine and Fundamentally Human': A Qualitative Study into Dutch Humanist Chaplains' Conceptualizations of Empathy," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* ahead-of-print, no. ahead-of-print (2023): 11.

when leaving a baby at home and coming into work.” Bridget encourages other female deputies to take advantage of every moment they have to spend quality time with their children and reminds them that they keep their kids safe and provide food and shelter while patrolling the county roads. A female deputy told Bridget that looking from that perspective makes it less stressful to leave home knowing she’s still keeping her kids safe while working.

Chantal, the remaining deputy who also serves as chaplain, stated, “When it comes down to it, we girls need one another. There are some stressors female deputies and chaplains experience that men just don’t have a clue about.” Chantal shared how she hopes to assist all deputies in handling their stressors but is most excited about helping the ladies. She said, “Since coming on as a chaplain, I’m now connecting on a deeper level with some of the girls around here. It’s encouraging to see how they are opening up to share the things they worry about.” One deputy told Chantal she was considering quitting because she does not think people take her seriously. After several talks with Chantal, the deputy’s attitude and outlook has improved. In 2022, a study was conducted on how workplace social support can reduce psychological distress. The study showed, “Workplace support can buffer the effects of stress at work.”²⁵ Following the chaplaincy training, chaplains like Chantal, who are also deputies, are making a positive difference and are helping their peers positively handle work-related stressors, thus building deputies’ confidence. This study also noted that support from a co-worker is more beneficial than support from a supervisor because they can relate better to them and do not fear being held from promotions.

²⁵ Reiko Inoue et al., “Workplace Social Support and Reduced Psychological Distress,” *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 64, no. 11 (2022): e700.

Aiming to encourage deputies to look at their stressors as opportunities for God to work, Chaplain Sonny reminds others that we would not need to trust God if everything was perfect. Chaplain Jim shared that the stressors deputies face are similar to what pastors experience. He said, “We have a lot in common, and Christ is the best One to relieve our stress. We must lay everything at his feet and trust him to meet our needs.” Jim often reminds deputies that the stressors they face can make them stronger deputies if they seek to discover what God is trying to teach them.

It is easy for chaplains to get stressed by attempting to be perfect. Chaplain Seth said, “I try to remind myself that only Christ was perfect and that the best chaplains are the ones who focus on being themselves and making themselves available.” Two days after a tragic event occurred at the sheriff’s office, he visited most divisions to see if anyone needed assistance. While walking down the hall, a usually standoffish deputy bumped into Seth and said, “Thanks for being here.” Seth stated, “I think we helped one another lift our stress burdens that day.” He also shared that the instruction during the chaplaincy training helped him realize the importance of being available for ministry opportunities.

Being concerned over the health of deputies who do not adequately address their work stress lays heavy on Chaplain Frank’s heart. He said, “I’ve heard stories of guys who are constantly sick and about those who have even died because of stress. I don’t want that to happen on my watch.” Studies show that “Psychological stress is a major risk factor for the development and progression of a number of diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, arthritis, and major depression.”²⁶ Frank is vocal about ensuring that deputies know chaplains are available

²⁶ Valentina Perciavalle et al., “The Role of Deep Breathing on Stress,” *Neurological Sciences* 38, no. 3 (03, 2017): 451.

24/7 to help them work through their stressors. He also believes assisting deputies in working through their stress has helped him bond with them. He said, “One day, while making my rounds, a deputy asked if I had lunch plans. He told me he had to make some difficult decisions about his future and that instead of worrying about it, he thought maybe he could talk to a chaplain.” At lunch, the deputy shared he lacked one year from being vested with the county but was considering changing careers. He said, “This keeps me up at night and adds a lot of strain to my marriage.” Frank told the deputy that God has a specific plan and purpose for his life (Jer. 29:11) and that he should pray for God to lead, guide, and direct him (Prov. 3:5–6). One month later, the deputy stopped by Frank’s church during the week and said, “It worked! My wife and I prayed about my future, and God showed us that I needed to stay where I am. Thanks for listening to me and giving me good advice.” Chaplain Frank said it did his heart good to know that he helped a deputy and removed some of the pressure he felt about not being used as a chaplain.

Desiring to help individuals at the CCSO deal with work stress is a top priority for Chaplain Ben, “During our chaplaincy training this summer, I learned so much through the teaching and role-playing about things that cause unsurmountable stress in deputies’ lives. I told myself I want to make a difference.” Although Ben is new to law enforcement chaplaincy and our youngest chaplain, he has already demonstrated his ability to assist deputies in coping with

sources of stress. He accomplishes this by genuinely caring for deputies, making himself accessible, and praying with them.

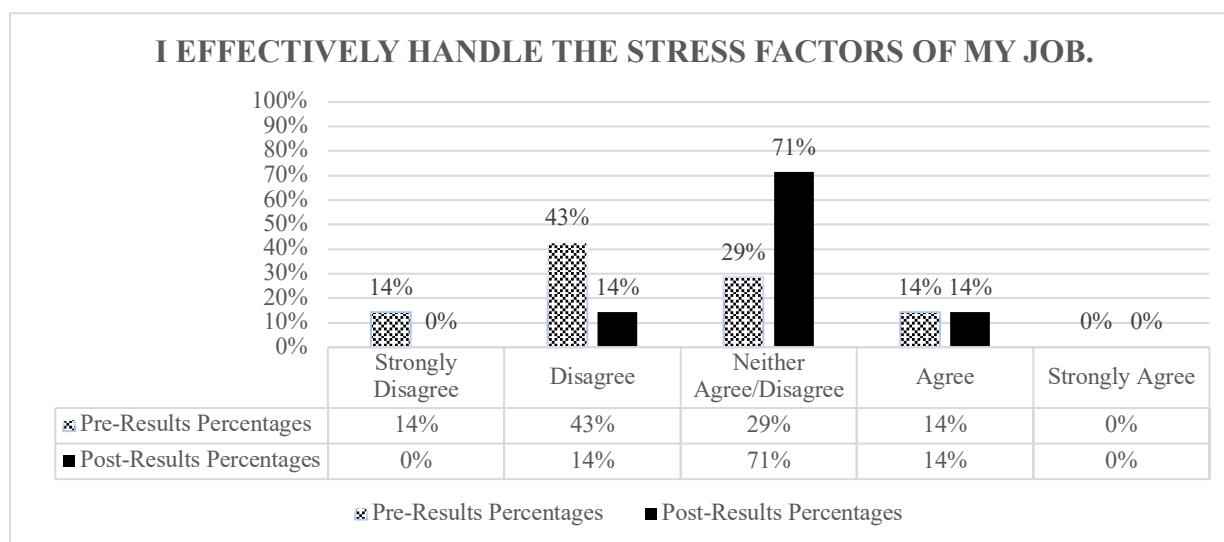


Figure 1. Job stress factors

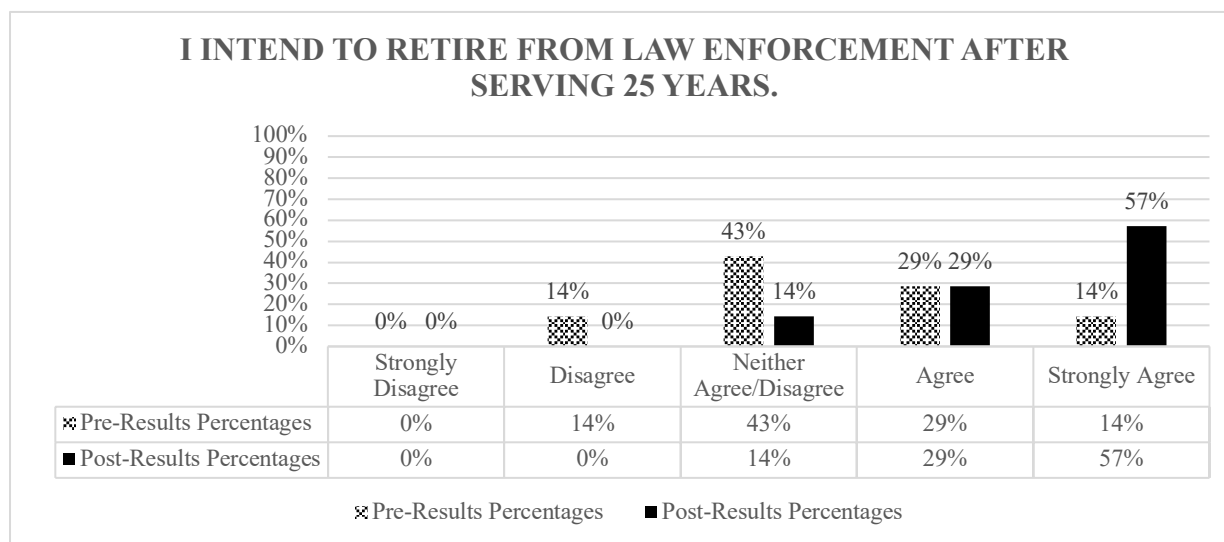


Figure 2. Retirement plans

Figure 1 records how deputies handle the stress factors of their work. Before the chaplaincy training, 43% of deputies disagreed that they effectively handled work stress. However, following the training, only 14% disagreed with how they handle stress. Figure 2 shows the responses of deputies being asked if they plan to retire from law enforcement after

servicing twenty-five years. Only 14% strongly agreed before the training, but 57% said they planned to serve twenty-five years and then retire afterward. These figures indicate that chaplains are assisting deputies with their stressors, thus causing them to pursue longer law enforcement careers.

The researcher has observed many indicators suggesting that deputies' spiritual, physical, and emotional needs have been addressed since the chaplaincy training was implemented. While deputies have coped with stressors, several chaplains have assisted them. As previously mentioned, one female deputy was stressed and burdened by the aftermath of a miscarriage. She was encouraged by a female chaplain who shared the same experience. Another chaplain was able to help a male deputy who was struggling with his finances. Through a healthy conversation during a ride-along, the deputy was challenged to attend a biblically-based financial class taught at the chaplain's church. The deputy accepted the offer and has seen a positive difference in his finances. These are only a few ways chaplains have helped deputies with stress. Still, the researcher anticipates that chaplains will earn deputies' trust and equip them to overcome their stressors as the chaplaincy ministry continues.

Theme 3: Trust

Trust: Deputy's Perspective

Another theme that surfaced during the interviews was trust. Some deputies have trust battles because they deal with insincere people daily. One of the most common examples that leads to trust issues is the lies they are told. Petty shared many of the deceptive stories people often tell him and other law enforcement personnel. One example he gave was pulling someone over whom he suspected was driving under the influence of alcohol. Deputy Petty said, "I'd say about 90 percent of the 10-55s (intoxicated drivers) I deal with always say they've only had a

couple of beers. Now, don't get me wrong, if you're over the legal limit, you're going to jail even if ya tell the truth, but it wears on ya after a while."

Petty also talked about how people lie about drugs they may be hiding in their clothing or vehicle. To build trust with individuals, he will not arrest someone if they have a small amount of marijuana that is obviously for personal use as long as they've been truthful about possessing it. According to Petty, the Alabama law leaves this decision to the officer's discretion. He said, "I know guys that don't cut any slack when it comes to that, but I've found it's beneficial in gaining people's confidence in us when we do. I'll never fully trust them, but I want them to trust me." Petty continued by sharing he has built a reputation for being a man of his word, especially with minorities in Cullman County, "People trust me because they know if they're truthful, I'm going to give them a break as long as the law allows me." Building trust with minorities is crucial to Deputy Petty because he knows that African Americans exhibit a higher prevalence of unfavorable sentiments towards and reduced trust in law enforcement authorities.²⁷ His concentrated effort to earn people's trust where he patrols has gained him confidential informants, "Citizens that offer up criminal intelligence."²⁸ He frequently engages in conversations with these individuals, which allows him to gain insights into criminal activities and ultimately enhances his ability to solve crimes.

The issue of trusting others poses a barrier not just for deputies in their official capacity but also impacts their interactions with family members. Deputy Hurley admitted that he struggles with trusting his teenage daughter. She often isolates herself from the rest of the family

²⁷ Melissa Thompson, and Kimberly Barsamian Kahn, "Mental Health, Race, and Police Contact: Intersections of Risk and Trust in the Police," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 39, no. 4 (2016): 809.

²⁸ Dean A. Dabney and Richard Tewksbury, *Speaking Truth to Power: Confidential Informants and Police Investigations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 29.

and was recently caught vaping. He lamented, “It might not be right, but ever since I caught her lying about vaping at the park, I can’t help but wonder what else she’s lying about.” Hurley continued by sharing that one of the female students at his high school reminds him of his daughter. As the school resource officer, he has had many unpleasant encounters with this student. He said sometimes, when his daughter is talking to him, he cannot help but visualize the girl at his school who looks like his daughter. Hurley shared, “They both have brown curly hair, are similar in build, and get the jitters when you ask questions. I wish my mind didn’t take me to this girl, but it does, and it’s hard to listen to and believe my daughter is shooting straight with me.” Recently, he shared his lack of trust in his daughter with a CCSO Chaplain who also serves as a youth pastor. Hurley said, “I shared what I was struggling with one night at a football game with Chaplain Ben. He prayed for me and assured me that I’m not the only parent who deals with this and that I should take my daughter out on date nights to help us bond more. I’ve done that twice, and it’s been good for us.” John Seita, Associate Professor at Michigan State University School of Social Work, says, “Adults need strategies to connect with youth showing patterns of distancing behavior.”²⁹ Hurley is optimistic that following the chaplain’s council and developing strategies to spend quality time with his daughter will enable him to overcome his distrust toward her and foster a stronger connection.

Deputy Moore confessed that he too often struggles with trusting people, “I was naïve and wanted to think that everyone could do good, make good decisions, and improve themselves when I was a rookie deputy. You quickly learn that you can’t trust anyone after being burned a few times.” Deputy Dube echoed his colleague’s sentiments, “I have major trust issues with just about everybody because I work in an environment filled with lies.” A few years ago, as he was

²⁹ John Seita, “Reclaiming Disconnected Kids,” *Reclaiming Children and Youth* 23, no. 1 (2014): 30.

finishing his lunch at a restaurant, the manager approached him and said he was having trouble with one of the locals stealing coins from the water fountain outside his restaurant. When Dube exited the building and walked toward his patrol vehicle, he found a man whose pants pockets were soaking wet. So he asked, “Sir, do you know anything about money being stolen from the water fountain over there?” The man replied, “No, sir, it wasn’t me. I don’t know nuttin’ about it.” Dube told the man that it wasn’t hot enough for him to sweat through his pockets and that he needed to empty them of the wet coins from the fountain before he was taken to jail. He said, “It was obvious that this guy was lying through the skin of his teeth, but what really bothers me is when I can’t trust people I work with.” Dube shared that he had found himself not even trusting chaplains, “Before the revisions were made to the chaplaincy program, I thought that most of our chaplains had ulterior motives, but now I believe y’all are legit and want to help us cope with all the crap we go through. You’ve proved yourselves, and you’re obviously here for the right reasons.”

Distrust in individuals and organizations is something that many law enforcement personnel battle throughout their careers. Deputy Harlon confessed, “Since my first year in law enforcement, I’ve not been the same. Cynicism has plagued my career.” Cynicism is “A state of mind characterized by a distrust of other’s motives.”³⁰ Harlon continued, “It doesn’t take but a few bad experiences to get ya to that place where ya don’t trust people. I’ve had issues with even trusting the guys I work with. Before coming here, I had a supervisor stab me in the back.” Harlon clarified by sharing he was on his way to being promoted to sergeant when a supervisor who appeared to be supportive of his promotion wrote him a negative year-end evaluation. This

³⁰ Dale C. Spencer, et al., “Cynicism, Dirty Work, and Policing Sex Crimes,” *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 43, no. 1 (2020): 152.

evaluation noted that Harlon's response time to calls was not on par, and he was not a team player. Harlon said, "Those claims were false but nonetheless kept me from getting promoted. Since then, it's been hard for me to trust people even when they seem to have my back. I'm always wondering when I'll get dumped on again. But some good has come out of all that." Deputy Harlon admitted that if he had not had this unfortunate experience, he would not have transferred to the CCSO. He said, "I still fight with thoughts of distrust, but the guys I'm working with now are great. Sheriff Gentry and our entire sheriff's office leadership is second to none. How they treat me and handle things is building my trust up, and that's why I enjoy working here." When chaplains have confidence in their colleagues, their ability to trust grows, and they realize what they can achieve as they work together.³¹ Harlon also shared that one of the chaplains who serves as a deputy has given him positive reinforcement to believe genuine people are working with him and desire to see him thrive as a deputy.

Christian law enforcement officers are not exempt from trust issues. Deputy Byrd said, "As a follower of Christ, the things I witness daily sometimes wear me down, and I wonder if God is aware of what's going on. I know He's not taking a nap, but sometimes it feels that way, and I fail to rely on Him as I should." He continued, "It's easy to have faith in the Lord in the good times, but when things aren't so good, it gets hard." With a smile, Byrd shared that a recent text message from the lead chaplain lifted his spirits, "God knows when you need to be encouraged, and that day, through a text, I was reminded that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is so faithful! So I've still gotta look to Him when things don't go my way."

³¹ Dennis Reina and Michelle Reina, *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2015). 110.

Deputy Phillips expressed his regret about how his law enforcement career has instilled a lack of trust in people. He shared that in a crowded environment, he is constantly looking for potential dangers, specifically individuals who may pose a threat to him or someone else. This is true when he is on duty and when he is off. Phillips said, “Whenever I take my family out to eat, I always try to sit with my back against the wall, close to an exit and where I can see who’s entering the building because if there’s a threat, I want to end it and protect my family.” He continued, “Markie may be talking to me, and yes, I’m listening to her, but I’m still on high alert. In law enforcement work, we call this hypervigilance. That’s what being a cop does to ya.” Hypervigilance is “An understanding that any situation has the potential to be violent and dangerous.”³² This mentality enables deputies to perform their duties safely; however, when not on duty, they may experience hypo-vigilance, which leads to fatigue and detachment from their family, exerting significant pressure on family relationships.³³ This detrimental cycle takes its toll on families and deputies. Still, this researcher remains optimistic that chaplains can help in this area by consistently earning the trust of deputies and serving as a source of encouragement and motivation.

Trust: Chaplain’s Perspective

Chaplains understand the significance of establishing trust with deputies. They are aware that law enforcement personnel are generally cynical towards others. Therefore, the chaplains have invested much time and effort into gaining the trust of deputies.

³² Grant Pooley, and Brie Turns, “Supporting Those Holding the Thin Blue Line: Using Solution-Focused Brief Therapy for Law Enforcement Families,” *Contemporary Family Therapy* 44, no. 2 (2022): 177.

³³ Pooley, and Turns, “Supporting those Holding the Thin Blue Line,” 177.

Chaplain Ben expressed his belief that since he's younger than most of the other chaplains, he feels compelled to demonstrate he's capable of serving in this capacity. He said, "Since I'm the youngest guy in the group, I feel like I gotta kinda prove myself. Some of the old timers can be intimidating, but I'm getting over that and showing I'm here to serve, and little by little, I see walls coming down." Barriers are dismantling, and Ben has effectively connected with many younger deputies. As a result, one deputy who was not involved in the church began worshipping with his two teenagers, where Ben serves as the youth pastor.

Chaplain Seth conveyed his excitement about getting to know the deputies who serve at the Cullman County Courthouse. Understanding that the chaplains have neglected this group in previous years, he is concentrating on gaining their trust. Seth shared, "I could tell they were skeptical of me the first couple of times I stopped by." During his first visit, one of the deputies asked if he was getting his car tags renewed because chaplains do not usually interact with the courthouse deputies. Chaplain Seth's effort is being acknowledged and acquiring trust, as evidenced by a courthouse deputy's request to pray for his ailing uncle.

Chaplains Lawrence and Dave shared that they were surprised to encounter feelings of distrust when they began serving as chaplains. They felt that some of their co-workers were questioning their motives. Dave said, "One guy who was burnt by a chaplain moons ago asked, 'Did they recruit you to snitch?'" Dave politely explained that he was there to serve as a resource for fellow deputies seeking to converse with a chaplain who knows from experience what it is like to serve as a full-time deputy. Lawrence suspected a few had reservations about his role as chaplain. He said, "It's our nature not to trust. This is the first time we've ever had deputies also serving as chaplains, so no one should be surprised. Give it some time, and they'll realize we're

here for the right reasons.” Those casting doubt on deputies serving as chaplains are few. The majority seem to be supportive.

Since deputies Chantal and Bridget began serving as chaplains, they have received positive feedback from female deputies. Bridget shared that she thought there might be trust issues, but she had already seen God use her to minister to other females. One deputy said, “Bridget, I feel like I can talk to you just like I talk to my mother.” Another expressed to Chantal that she was glad to have female chaplains, “It’s been a long time coming. I have full faith in both you and Bridget. I know I can trust you with anything if I can trust you both with my kids.” During the summer, these two chaplains offered free babysitting to the female deputies. Their generosity and service have earned the confidence of many female deputies.

Chaplain Jim shared his concerns about regaining the deputies’ trust. He previously served as a CCSO chaplain but was assigned to another parish, which made it impossible for him to be involved. Upon his return, he was discouraged to find that many of his friends had retired or were no longer serving as deputies. He said, “It seemed like I had to start over. You know these guys encounter so many hypocrites, and I knew I’d have to prove myself worthy to be confided in.” Father Jim is one of the most active chaplains and has proven to be someone others can trust.

Chaplain Sonny understands the lack of trust deputies have in others and acknowledges that he has this same struggle. As an Air Force Chaplain, he remembers how people tried to discredit him so they would be promoted over him. He said, “Sometimes the past haunts me, and I find myself questioning if those I’m serving with have ulterior motives. But as I fellowship more with our chaplains, the less I think that way.” Sonny also conveyed that he must build trusting relationships with all the chaplains. He said, “If we can’t trust each other, why should

these guys trust us?” Chaplain Sonny’s opinions are accurate. Chaplains must trust one another. For genuine ministry to occur, we must have mutual trust.

Chaplains Nick and Frank believe they are gaining the trust of those they have been able to spend time with. Nick shared that he has become close with those in the administration division. He said, “I’ve made strong connections with all of them, especially one of the ladies who’s a civilian employee. Her daughter died, and when Lexie was killed, a lot of emotions surfaced, but I’ve been able to talk with her, share Scripture with her, and pray with her over the last several months. We have a healthy bond.” Frank admitted that he was intimidated attending command staff meetings when he became a chaplain. He shared, “Some of them have poker faces or make you feel like they’re staring right through you, but I’ve learned they care about everybody, including us chaplains.” He continued, “I think most of that was in my head. These guys are passionate about their work and are the easiest to talk to. They make me feel valued when they talk to me.”

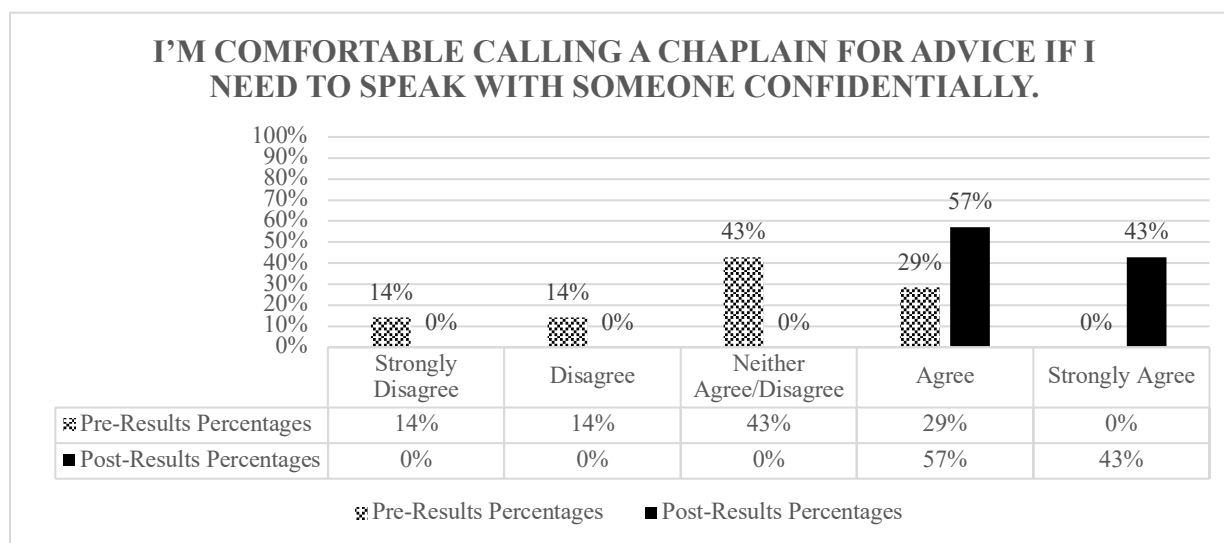


Figure 3. Seeking confidential advice

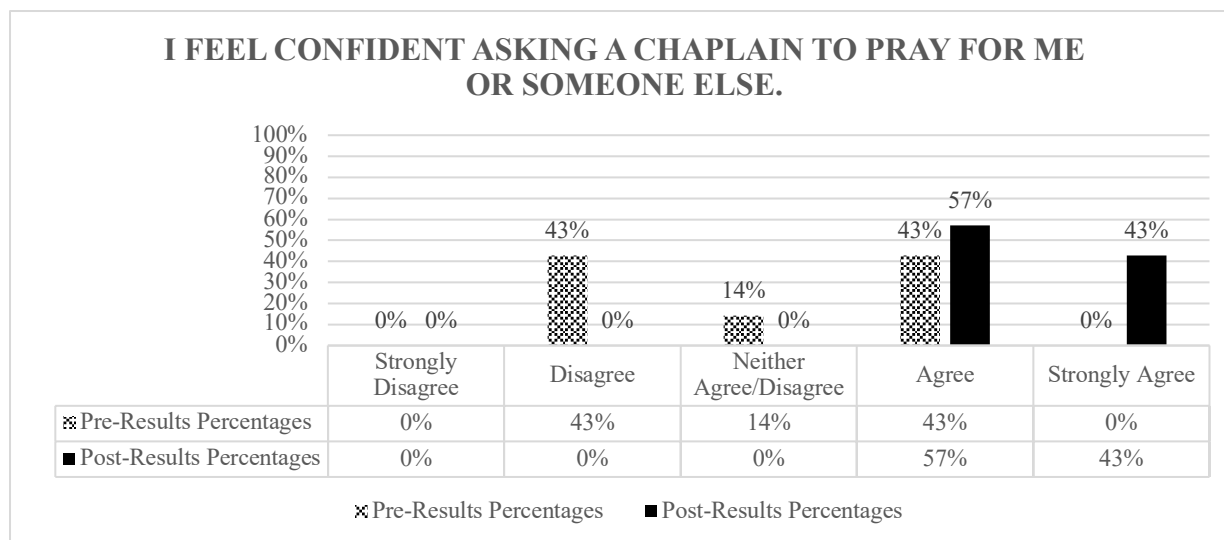


Figure 4. Seeking prayer

Following the chaplaincy training, the researcher has seen indicators that chaplains are earning deputies' confidence. Deputies are now more comfortable pursuing chaplains for advice and prayer, as demonstrated in figure 3 and figure 4. Trusting relationships have been developed and have opened the door for ministry opportunities. This researcher believes that as chaplains continue to gain deputies' trust, the impact of this ministry team will have more significant results and will establish itself as one of the most crucial aspects of the CCSO.

Theme 4: Relationships

Upon thoroughly analyzing the transcripts, the researcher concluded that the interviewees emphasized the importance of relationships and offered pragmatic strategies for developing them. This theme was interwoven in all the interviews and is also the key to addressing deputies' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. The importance of relationships was also evident from the results of the pre- and post-training Likert scales completed by deputies.

Relationships: Deputies Perspective

Deputy Byrd believes establishing relationships with chaplains helps relieve stress and fosters a healthy attitude. He said, “This job ain’t a cup of tea. We go through a lot, and no one needs to try to sort through this stuff on their own. Having a chaplain to talk with helps me spiritually and emotionally.” Byrd shared that he felt encouraged to do his job and challenged to be a Christian witness due to the relationships he has developed with chaplains.

Realizing the importance of cultivating relationships with others, Deputy Petty has built healthy relationships with his colleagues and chaplains. He has benefitted from talking to fellow deputies who know what wearing the badge is like. He said, “Many of these guys are more like brothers to me. They understand me and push me to be my best. We’re not just co-workers; we’re friends; we’re a family.” Petty also mentioned his relationships with chaplains, “I love our chaplains. They’re my brothers in Christ. When I’m down, they don’t judge me; they pick me up.” According to Deputy Petty, he meets weekly with one of the chaplains because it helps him unload and gives him a spiritual boost. This chaplain also functions as his accountability partner. He shared, “The close spiritual bond I’ve built with this guy is priceless. I’m telling you like it is I love our chaplains, bro. I mean it!”

Deputy Moore has seen firsthand the advantages of cultivating connections with fellow law enforcement officers. He shared, “I remember as a kid, my dad would invite some of his friends from the PD (police department) over to our house on Saturday to watch college football. They’d bring their wives and kids. It always made for a good time.” Moore divulged that many of the men who brought their families to his house were his dad’s closest confidants. His dad often talked to them about work issues, so he did not bring work home. He said, “My dad was a great example. He taught me that no man is an island and that relationships need to be a priority if you’re going to make it in this career.” Like his father, Moore uses his home to foster

relationships with fellow deputies and their families. It's not only beneficial for him but also for his family.

Regarding relationships, Deputy Dube confessed, "I struggle with connecting with people. Seriously, I'm uneasy about sharing what's going on in my life. They encourage us to do that, but it doesn't come naturally for me." Unfortunately, Dube grapples with trust issues; however, he has begun to demonstrate progress in this area, thanks to the dedicated efforts of chaplains, and he is starting to bond with them.

Deputy Phillips enthusiastically spoke of his relationship with chaplain Frank, "Man, Frank is the real deal. He's taken a lot of time with me and has made a difference in my life." Pointing to his heart, he said, "He's touched me right here. You know what I mean? I'm not the same man I used to be." Phillips shared how his relationship with Frank has facilitated his ability to cope with work challenges and contributed to his spiritual development.

Deputy Hurley is grateful for his friendship with the youngest chaplain at the CCSO. He said, "Chaplain Ben goes out of his way to get to know me. My school is on the county's edge, but he's come to several football games." By blocking out time and traveling across Cullman County, Ben has developed a friendship with this deputy and has been able to help him have a healthier relationship with his daughter.

Deputy Harlon asserts that for chaplains to be valuable to the sheriff's office, their primary emphasis should be cultivating connections with deputies. He said, "Don't expect anyone around here to confide in ya if you ya haven't taken time to get to know em. And understand It doesn't happen overnight." Deputy Harlon acknowledged his propensity for cynicism and suggested that a considerable number of deputies share similar inclinations.

However, as chaplains take the time to get to know him, the more the walls of cynicism gradually crumble.

Relationships: Chaplains Perspective

Chaplains recognize the importance of cultivating strong relationships to address deputies' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs effectively. Chaplain Sonny stated, "I can't think of anything more important than building solid relationships with deputies. Ministry is all about relationships. Without them, you have no ministry." Having extensive experience as a US Air Force Chaplain and LEO Chaplain, he actively seeks opportunities to cultivate meaningful connections. He said, "I'm trying my best to go on at least one ride-along each week even if I'm not the on-call chaplain. You've got to meet people on their turf, and ride-alongs allow chaplains to do that with deputies." Sonny continued by sharing that he already sees positive results from his efforts, as a few deputies have shared prayer requests with him.

Chaplain Ben shared his excitement about the relationships he has already built. He exclaimed, "Since our chaplaincy training, I've concentrated on going out of my way to develop relationships. Our deputies are super, and if you just invest a little time and make yourself available, you'll be amazed at how they open up to you." Jim echoed the same sentiments, "I go on ride-alongs every Monday. Usually, I go out for around four hours, sometimes longer. I've discovered that the guys I'm closest to and the ones who confide in me the most are those I've made connections with by doing ride-alongs. This is the best way to build relationships."

Developing relationships with deputies requires patience and effort. Frank assumed that his ability to form friendships rapidly in the churches he had served in would also apply to the sheriff's office. He lamented, "Establishing relationships here is a different ball of wax. It's taking longer than I expected, but I'm not giving up because recently, progress has been made."

Frank has begun bringing donuts to the CCSO at 6 a.m. to share with those coming on duty as a way to gain access into their lives. This simple act is opening the doors to relationships. He looks forward to getting to know deputies as they share coffee and donuts.

Chaplain Nick has discovered that practicing the ministry of presence is the most effective way for him to build relationships. The ministry of presence is “The ability to comfort without uttering a word.”³⁴ He shared that he was challenged during the training not to be a chaplain by name only but to be active, “If I want people to know me around here, I’ve got to be like Jesus and go where they are. You can’t just sit around waiting for someone to call you.” Nick has seen how his mere presence can restore calmness in stressful situations by being present in dispatch during challenging moments.

Chaplain Seth agrees with Nick that you’ve got to go where people are to develop meaningful relationships. He has made an assertive effort to get to know the deputies working at the courthouse. He said, “I could tell they weren’t used to chaplains being around, but I just tried to make the best of it. One of the guys is a big Alabama fan, so we had something in common, and I just started running with that.” Since Seth has been making weekly visits to these deputies, he has noticed a difference in their attitudes toward him and other chaplains.

According to chaplains Dave, Lawrence, Chantal, and Bridget, an effective means to cultivate relationships is by spending time with deputies. Like many others, they believe this is accomplished through conducting ride-alongs. Since they are full-time deputies, they do not participate in them, but know from experience how they bring deputies and chaplains together. Participating in ride-alongs provides chaplains with two opportunities. First, “It teaches the chaplain about the real world of policing. Secondly, it gives the officer and chaplain the

³⁴ Cary A. Friedman, *Spiritual Survival for Law Enforcement* (Linden, NJ: Compass Books, 2005), 76.

opportunity to get to know each other.”³⁵ Understanding ride-alongs’ role in establishing relationships, these deputies encourage chaplains to conduct them as often as possible. During the chaplaincy training, Dave and Lawrence taught about their importance and how they help deputies bond with chaplains.

Strategies for Developing Relationships

Throughout the pre- and post-training interview process, deputies discussed strategies for chaplains to cultivate and nurture relationships with deputies. A plethora of pragmatic recommendations were provided. The ride-alongs method was highly praised, and chaplains prioritized them. Following the completion of the chaplaincy training, a substantial number of ride-along hours have been recorded. From July 1 until February 26, seven chaplains accounted for 576 hours of ride-alongs. On average, each chaplain has invested over 82 hours with deputies while on patrol. Another means for fostering relationships is by chaplains establishing their presence. They must exert themselves to demonstrate their concern by being proactive. Chaplains often refer to this concept as the ministry of presence. Since the training, all seven divisions of the sheriff’s office have observed an increased presence of chaplains.

The researcher focused on the issue of deputies experiencing unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs due to the absence of a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO. The researcher discovered numerous recurring themes by conducting interviews with deputies and chaplains. The interviewees expressed that they pursued a career in law enforcement due to their desire to serve others. However, as time has passed, the toll of stressors, a deficiency in trust, and the absence of healthy relationships have led to their emotional, physical, and spiritual

³⁵ David W. DeRevere et al., *Chaplaincy in Law Enforcement: What It Is and How to Do It* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 2005), 96.

needs not being fulfilled. By providing chaplaincy training for six local ministers and four deputies who serve as bi-vocational ministers, these individuals have begun ministering to deputies to address these unmet needs.

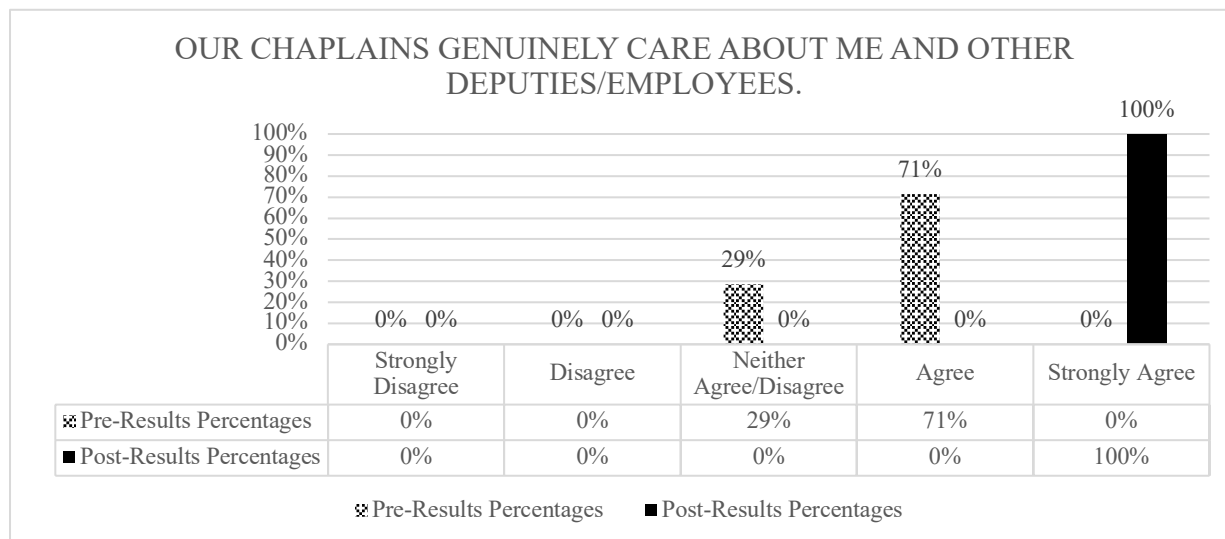


Figure 5. Care of employees

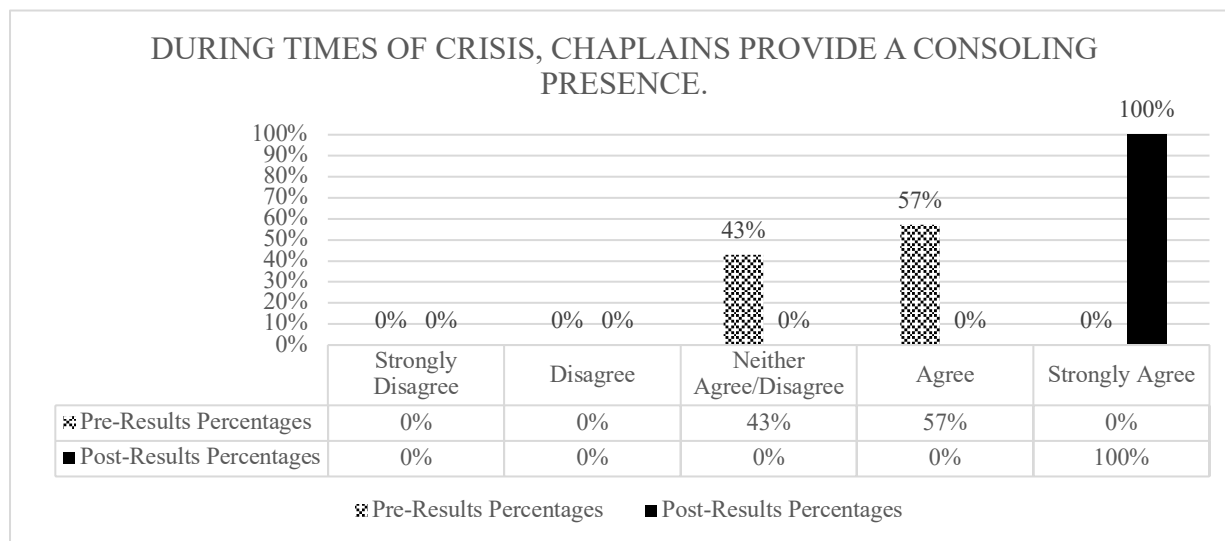


Figure 6. Consoling presence

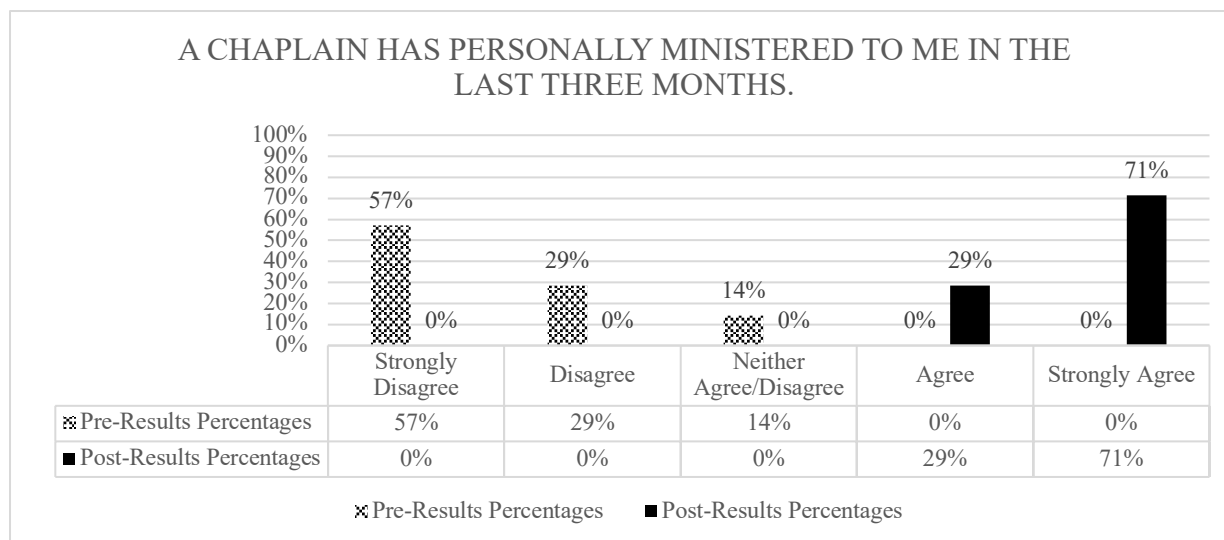


Figure 7. Personal ministry

The benefits of chaplains building healthy relationships with deputies are exemplified in Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7. Figure 5 shows how much deputies feel that chaplains care for them. Before the chaplaincy training, 0% of deputies felt that chaplains strongly cared for them. However, after the training, 100% of deputies believed they were strongly cared for by chaplains. Figure 6 shows how deputies feel about chaplains providing consolation during crises. Before the training, 0% felt that chaplains provided a consoling presence. However, following the training, 100% believe that chaplains provide a consoling presence during moments of crisis. Figure 7 demonstrates if deputies have been personally ministered to by chaplains. Before the training, 0% of deputies felt they were personally ministered to. However, after the training, 71% shared that they strongly agree that they have been ministered to by a chaplain over the past three months.

Summary of Results

Since the chaplaincy training has been conducted, evidence of chaplains addressing and meeting deputies' needs has been identified. One deputy has repaired a damaged relationship

with his teenage daughter by heeding a chaplain's advice to take her on date nights. Another deputy struggled with managing his finances, but after developing a relationship with a chaplain he was encouraged to attend a faith-based financial planning class. As a result, he started seeing a positive difference in his finances in a short time. The restructuring of the chaplaincy ministry has resulted in the development of healthy relationships and ministry opportunities. The researcher looks forward to seeing more positive change as this ministry progresses.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research project involves recruiting and training local pastors from churches in Cullman County, Alabama, to serve as chaplains for the CCSO. The problem is that many deputies have unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. This intervention addresses these needs by utilizing trained chaplains as they establish trusting relationships with deputies. As the research advanced, the researcher identified potential future steps to expand this project. The first step is to recruit more ordained ministers to serve as chaplains. The second step will be to continue offering mandatory training for new chaplains and specialized training for current chaplains to address deputies' work stressors and the threat of PTSD. Future research with an emphasis on recruiting more female chaplains is needed. Also, training for vicarious trauma is warranted, as deputies and family members often experience this phenomenon. Vicarious trauma occurs when a person begins to feel as though they have personally experienced the trauma of someone else.¹ Failure to address this can result in individual, marital, and family problems, causing many deputies to leave their careers.

Research Implications

Six Cullman County ministers were recruited and trained to serve as chaplains at the CCSO for this action research project. Following a one-day chaplaincy training workshop, each participant committed to serving as a chaplain. Also, one deputy from each of the seven divisions at the CCSO participated in this research. Chaplains and deputies developed trusting relationships over several months, allowing chaplains to address deputies' unfulfilled needs.

¹ Anita Ravi, Jessica Gorelick, and Harika Pal, "Identifying and Addressing Vicarious Trauma," *American Family Physician* 103, no. 9 (May 01, 2021): 570.

Through the chaplaincy training taught by the researcher, local ordained pastors were equipped with essential chaplaincy skills to establish rapport with deputies. These skills enabled chaplains to build healthy relationships with deputies and address their unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs while motivating them to continue their law enforcement careers. Furthermore, four sworn CCSO deputies who serve as bi-vocational pastors were challenged to participate. The researcher believed it was imperative to have chaplains who are also sworn deputies involved in this ministry to support those who may seek counsel without fear of judgment from someone who can personally relate to their experiences. The godly witness of these four individuals has proven to be an added blessing to the chaplain ministry.

The primary objective of the current project was to recruit chaplains to address the unfulfilled needs in deputies' lives and demonstrate that they are valued and supported. The researcher emphasized the importance of accessibility through the ministry of presence and establishing healthy relationships with deputies while implementing the chaplaincy ministry program. The aim was not just to create a program but a genuine ministry that would resonate with law enforcement personnel, who can be highly cynical and resistant to others. Therefore, the chaplaincy ministry focused on building trust through personal connections with deputies to create a long-lasting and impactful ministry.

Research Applications

As the research advanced, the researcher discovered several potential applications for implementation. These applications could enhance the strength and effectiveness of this ministry while cultivating healthy relationships between chaplains and deputies. In addition, these applications could assist in ensuring the longevity of the CCSO chaplaincy ministry.

Further Ordained Chaplain Recruitment

The researcher will continue recruiting local ordained pastors to serve as chaplains to sustain and strengthen the chaplaincy ministry. To further involve the chaplains and foster a healthy team spirit, the researcher will ask them to submit the names and contact information of ministers they believe would be valuable additions to the current chaplaincy team. Doug Carver, the Executive Director of Chaplaincy for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, states, “Every chaplain is a recruiter. Recruiting those in your sphere of influence who would be great chaplains must be one of your major ministry priorities.”² Therefore, as this ministry continues, chaplains will be challenged to prioritize recruiting others to serve in this role. Upon receiving the prospects’ information, the researcher will contact these individuals to discover if they are interested in learning more about the CCSO chaplaincy ministry. For those desiring to learn more, the researcher will schedule a meeting to share specifics about the need for more chaplains and how the minister can make a positive impact by serving in this capacity.

In addition to receiving referrals from existing chaplains, the researcher will consistently attend the monthly CCMA lunches to establish connections with local pastors and recruit additional chaplains. The CCMA provides an excellent opportunity to meet ministers from various denominations throughout Cullman County. The researcher intends to arrange a monthly luncheon outside of this meeting to recruit chaplaincy candidates. Just as relationships are meaningful for chaplains and deputies, personal connections with other pastors are essential for building the CCSO chaplaincy recruitment list.

² Doug Carver, “Every Chaplain Is A Recruiter,” last modified September 26, 2023, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.namb.net/resource/every-chaplain-is-a-recruiter>.

To help keep chaplains accountable for recruiting new chaplains, they will meet as a group for breakfast or lunch each month with this researcher to discuss the chaplaincy ministry and to be challenged to enlist chaplain prospects. During these meetings, chaplains will be instructed to provide information on any prospects, including new ministers called to Cullman County churches. This researcher will send a welcome letter to those new to the county and attempt to schedule a luncheon within the first three months of their arrival.

At our semi-annual meetings with the sheriff, chaplains will be encouraged to invite a local minister to join them. This fellowship will help them build their ministry network and expose them to the CCSO Chaplaincy Ministry. At this meeting, the chaplain who has helped recruit the most chaplains will receive the “Top Recruiter Award.” This honor recipient will receive a gift card from a local restaurant. As this researcher and current CCSO Chaplains make recruiting new chaplains a priority, the status of this ministry will remain vibrant for years to come.

Continual Chaplaincy Training

The next step in this project involves implementing chaplaincy training for existing chaplains and maintaining training for newcomers to this ministry. During the year, current chaplains will be offered at least two training opportunities at the CCSO Captain Ricky Blackwood Training Facility. The researcher will teach new chaplains mandatory introductory training to law enforcement chaplaincy every quarter. These training opportunities will give chaplains the essential skills to address deputies’ unfulfilled emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. To help further equip chaplains, the researcher will inform them of more training opportunities at other agencies, including the ICPC Annual Training Seminar held each summer.

The researcher will conduct introductory chaplaincy training for prospective chaplains in January, April, July, and October. During this training, chaplains will learn of deputies' unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs and how they can be used to address these needs. This training will be a prerequisite for acceptance into the chaplaincy ministry program and additional training. An initial email will be sent to all participants two months before the training, requesting the chaplains to confirm their commitment to pursuing becoming CCSO Chaplains. Then, beginning one month before the training, the researcher will send weekly emails reminding everyone of the training. The training will occur on Thursdays, the third week of these months, and will be conducted between 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at the CCSO Training Center. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for all participants. Current chaplains may attend to offer support and encouragement to incoming ones.

Ongoing in-house training for existing chaplains will be offered for all chaplains. The first training day will be held in May and will focus on the stressors of law enforcement work and PTSD. The researcher will teach this training and offer it on the second Tuesday of the month. The training will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 2:00 p.m. The second training will occur the second week of November and will be facilitated by the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team at the CCSO Training Center. This training will be mandatory for all chaplains and will be held Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Sessions will cover the emotional and spiritual care of deputies, critical incidents, suicide and substance abuse among law enforcement, and PTSD. Since these are long training days, the sheriff's office will provide breakfast, and participants will have an hour-and-a-half lunch break. The material is biblically based and is taught by retired law enforcement personnel. Finally, all chaplains will be encouraged to attend the ICPC Annual Training Seminar in July in Pittsburgh, PA. Chaplains

may choose between basic core classes and advanced classes. This is an excellent opportunity to receive specialized training from some of the best law enforcement chaplain instructors and a way to make connections with other chaplains in different states.

Summary

A strategic discussion was held with chaplains and deputies to examine the future of the chaplaincy ministry and methods to increase chaplain involvement. Several practical ways for chaplains to be more involved were addressed. As a result, one chaplain committed to ensuring that a chaplain was present each time an agility test was given for perspective deputies. The chaplain will pray with deputies before they begin and may participate if physically able.

Another volunteered to secure a chaplain to attend all police academy graduations. To help share the excitement of finishing the academy, a chaplain agreed to host a dinner at his church for the graduates and spouses or significant others. At this dinner, the chaplaincy ministry's services will be briefly mentioned. Since Cullman County is home to Smith Lake and many people own boats, one chaplain volunteered to organize a day at the lake for deputies, chaplains, and their families. This event should provide an excellent opportunity to build relationships as individuals eat, waterski, tube, ride watercraft, compete in cornhole, and volleyball. This meeting provided healthy discussion and offered ways for chaplains, deputies, and their families to make personal connections with the CCSO family, which will be helpful to everyone while sustaining the chaplaincy ministry for the foreseeable future.

Research Limitations

A lack of participation from local pastors limited this research project. Initially, the researcher contacted nearly forty pastors to gauge their interest in serving as chaplains. Shortly after reaching out to these individuals, ten answered affirmatively, but by the time training was conducted, four decided not to participate due to time restraints. Therefore, only six local civilian pastors committed to helping meet this need. The most noticeable chaplain limitation that surfaced was the absence of females. Male pastors were more inclined to embrace the opportunity to serve as law enforcement chaplains than female ministers.

Another research limitation was deputy participation. The researcher aimed to enlist two deputies from the seven divisions within the CCSO. At first, fourteen deputies committed to assisting the researcher, but within twelve days of the interviews being conducted, only half participated. Many felt that with the shortage of deputies on their shift and overtime demands, they could not devote the necessary time to be involved. Although this limited the research, all seven divisions were still represented.

Further Research

As the researcher gathered data for this project, potential areas for future research were revealed. The areas that warrant further research to enhance the effectiveness of the chaplaincy ministry are female chaplain recruitment, and vicarious trauma support. The researcher suggests exploring these topics would help address deputies' unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Moreover, conducting further research on these topics will help develop a robust chaplaincy ministry and be one others aspire to emulate.

Female Chaplain Recruitment

The first possible research area is recruiting female chaplains to participate in the chaplaincy ministry. In the present study, the researcher encountered difficulties recruiting local civilian female clergy, but two female deputies who are pastors willingly volunteered to serve in this role. The additional males recruited were more eager to serve. Still, the researcher is hopeful that more civilian females serving in local churches will be open to volunteering if they hear testimonies of current female chaplains and the positive difference they are making.

Due to the inherent violence in law enforcement work, there is a limited number of women who are willing to volunteer as CCSO chaplains. Therefore, the researcher sought guidance from a comprehensive female soldier support model developed by Daniel L Roberts, the president and CEO of Moral Injury Support Network for Servicewomen, to address this issue. This model yielded valuable insights into the experiences of female military chaplains in offering support to female soldiers.

Just as in the military, women represent a minority group at the CCSO and an even smaller minority within the chaplaincy ministry.³ Before this research project, the sheriff's office lacked a specific plan for supporting female personnel so that women deputies do not "feel alienated, rejected, and discriminated against."⁴ The need for additional support is evident even with the two female chaplains. Although all deputies need a person they can trust and confide in, gender does not necessarily matter to all, and the CCSO should be able to refer a deputy to a female chaplain if that is preferred.⁵

³ Daniel L. Roberts, Joann Kovacich, and Melvin J. Rivers, "The Comprehensive Female Soldier Support Model," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 24, no. 1 (2018): 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

Female chaplains are uniquely equipped to meet the needs distinctly specific to women. As society tries to enforce gender equality, “it is dangerous to think of everyone as being the same.”⁶ Although female deputies serve in roles that have the potential of being just as dangerous to their physical and mental well-being as male deputies, women experience these situations differently. As a result, they are sometimes reluctant to express their emotions because they may fear being viewed as weaker than men. Women need the presence of other women who can relate to them and offer unwavering support because frequently, women, more than men, require “processing their emotions and anxiety, talking about specific incidents that occurred, and de-stressing.”⁷ To provide equal support for male and female deputies at the CCSO, the researcher wants to ensure that all deputies have access to a chaplain that best meets their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

Vicarious Trauma

Another potential research focus involves developing a plan that will decrease the chances of deputies and their family members encountering vicarious trauma. According to Beth Molnar, Professor of Health Sciences and Director of the PhD Program in Population Health at Northeastern University in Milton, Massachusetts, “Vicarious trauma (VT) refers to the exposure to the trauma experiences of others.”⁸ Deputies are susceptible to the risk of experiencing VT because “they are exposed to traumatic events on a regular basis; in some cases, [they] are exposed every day.” *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, notes, “The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk

⁶ Roberts, Kovacich, and Rivers, “The Comprehensive Female Soldier Support Model,” 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸ Beth E. Molnar et al., “Advancing Science and Practice for Vicarious Traumatization/Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Research Agenda,” *Traumatology (Tallahassee, Fla.)* 23, no. 2 (2017): 129.

through water without getting wet.”⁹ Subsequently, law enforcement officers and their families will inevitably face some form of VT during their careers.

This anomaly can also affect individuals close to deputies after they hear their disturbing stories. Consequently, they begin undergoing psychological issues that could affect their relationships with their spouse and children. In some cases, they may develop the inability to support their spouse’s choice to remain in a law enforcement profession. According to *Advancing Science and Practice for Vicarious Traumatic/Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Research Agenda*, the more severe effects that VT can have on individuals are an alteration to their worldview and negative behavioral responses such as “vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, PTSD, unhealthy behaviors, and compassion fatigue.”¹⁰ Ideally, the researcher would like to move the CCSO deputies who suffer from VT from these negative responses on the “Spectrum of Affective and Behavioral Responses” to the positive reactions on this spectrum. Positive responses include “vicarious resilience, post-traumatic growth, vicarious transformation, and compassion satisfaction.”¹¹

This issue must be addressed for the health of CCSO deputies and their families. Currently, chaplains support deputies dealing with any emotional distress and collaborate with other outside agencies to assist when necessary. However, no strategic plan exists to help those struggling with VT. This researcher believes incorporating the ABCs framework, as outlined in Psychologist Judith Pierson’s study of Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care, will significantly benefit the CCSO deputies and their families and even minimize VT in their lives. The A in the ABCs of VT stands

⁹ Rachel Naomi Remen and Dean Ornish, *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal*, Riverhead 10th Anniversary ed., (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), 60.

¹⁰ Molnar, *Advancing Science and Practice for Vicarious Traumatization*, 131.

¹¹ Ibid.

for awareness. Law enforcement officers need to be made aware of the meaning of VT and the serious risks that may result, which can negatively affect them and their families. They must also be mindful of their “own needs, limits, emotions.”¹² Deputies armed with this knowledge will be empowered to recognize that they are not alone and do not have to internalize the traumatic situations to which they are exposed.

The B stands for balance. When deputies are mindful of balancing work and play, taking care of others, and taking care of themselves by developing healthy habits, personal interests, and hobbies, they can positively cope with the dark aspects of their jobs.¹³ These positive behaviors have the potential to counteract any tendencies to respond to trauma with negative behaviors or in isolation.

Finally, the C stands for connections. Deputies must connect to themselves and something larger than themselves.¹⁴ Outside of connecting to oneself and something more significant, it is also beneficial for deputies and their families to cultivate friendships with people not affiliated with law enforcement and those associated with this realm. Friendships with those not associated with law enforcement can promote a healthy outlook and illuminate the reality of different points of view. Just as importantly, having friendships within the law enforcement community will remind them that they are not alone in serving and caring for others. Accordingly, peer support promotes community and is invaluable among law enforcement officers.

¹² Delaware Health and Social Services, *Vicarious Trauma & Self Care*, accessed March 16,2024. https://dhss.delaware.gov/dsamh/files/si09_1314_vicarioustrauma_selfcare.pdf.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Delaware Health and Social Services, *Vicarious Trauma & Self Care*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research project is to train local pastors to serve alongside deputies at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in Cullman, Alabama so that they can address their unmet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Each step outlined above, and future research areas aim to sustain and enhance the chaplaincy ministry. The researcher recommends that recruiting additional ordained civilian chaplains, providing basic training for incoming ones, and offering specialized training for current chaplains is essential. This training will help foster healthy relationships with deputies and allow chaplains to meet their unfulfilled needs. Also, the researcher suggests that increasing the number of female chaplains and providing training on vicarious trauma will further address the deputies' unmet needs and strengthen the chaplaincy ministry, making it a flagship of such ministries.

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Appendix A

PERMISSION REQUEST

January 18, 2022

Matt Gentry
Sheriff
Cullman County Sheriff Office
1910 Beech Ave SE
Cullman, AL 35055

Dear Sheriff Gentry,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. The purpose of my research is to develop a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry to support all personnel at the CCSO.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office by contacting members of your staff to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule an interview. They will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval and email it to me at (deleted).

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain, Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Appendix B

SHERIFF MATT GENTRY'S PERMISSION RESPONSE LETTER

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

1910 Beech Avenue, S.E.
Cullman, Alabama 35055



MATT GENTRY
SHERIFF

Telephone
Jail Division
FAX



February 21, 2022

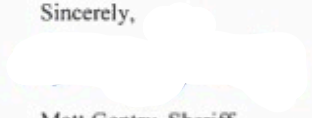
Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain
Cullman County Sheriff's Office
1910 Beech Ave SE
Cullman, AL 35055

Dear Matthew W. Smith:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled *Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office*, I have decided to grant you permission to access our staff and invite them to participate in your study.

I grant permission for Matthew W. Smith to contact anyone employed at the CCSO to invite them to participate in his study.

Sincerely,



Matt Gentry, Sheriff

Appendix C

CHAPLAIN LEADER'S 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 study is to help establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. I am inviting you to participate in this research study because your agency has a strong reputation for developing chaplains and ministering to law enforcement personnel.

To participate, you must be actively serving as a law enforcement chaplain in the state of Alabama. Taking part in this research project is voluntary and will last three to four months. Please take time to read the enclosed Chaplain Leader Participant Consent Form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research. Participants willing to participate in this project will be asked to consent to a forty-five to sixty-minute interview. This interview will be either in person, Zoom, or via phone. It will ask eight to twelve questions. Please look over the enclosed questions so you may be prepared when interviewed.

To participate, please read and sign the attached consent form within ten days. Upon completing this form, please email it to (email deleted).

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I look forward to meeting with you and learning from your current chaplaincy ministry.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain, Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Appendix D

CHAPLAIN PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office.

Principal Researcher: Matthew W. Smith, MDiv., Th.M., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study
--

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be actively serving as a law enforcement chaplain in the state of Alabama. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

The purpose of the study is to help meet the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of sworn and non-sworn personnel at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in Cullman, Alabama. The law enforcement profession is extremely stressful. Unfortunately, many do not handle stress well and suffer from depression, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, and divorce. It is believed that if a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed, then these trends can be minimized.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

Agree to meet with this researcher for an interview not to exceed one hour. During our meeting, you will be asked questions about your chaplaincy program ranging from how it was implemented to the benefits it gives. The interview will be either in person, Zoom, or via phone. This interview will be recorded and a transcription made. Data used from this interview will not include any of your personal information.

Agree to look over the audio recording transcription that took place during our meeting and check it for accuracy. If you believe you were misunderstood, please make corrections and email them to me.

Agree to make yourself available for a possible follow-up meeting by phone.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Other than knowing that you are helping another law enforcement agency develop a successful chaplaincy ministry, participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include having law enforcement personnel serving their communities who know they are supported.

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. However, in some situations, chaplains may experience guilt due to the knowledge that certain aspects of their chaplaincy ministry are lacking. As a result, some may believe that their agency is not one that should be emulated.

If you share evidence or suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or the desire to hurt oneself or others, this researcher has an ethical obligation to report the information to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The published reports will contain no information that could be used to identify participants. The researcher's study records will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to them. Your data may be shared with other researchers or used in future research studies. If data acquired from you is shared, any information that could be used to identify you will be erased.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes. Interviews will be conducted where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be initially stored on a password-protected computer and may be used in subsequent presentations. Individually identifiable information will be securely saved on a password-protected, encrypted data storage device. All data will be erased three years after it is collected.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be saved on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. However, while discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this voluntary study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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 decide 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 Matthew W. Smith. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via phone (deleted) or his email (deleted). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor (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 (deleted).

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

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 all meetings via audio or video as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Please respond by email within 7 days.

Signature & Date

Appendix E

CHAPLAIN LEADER'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You have decided to participate as a law enforcement chaplain leader in this study. As a result, I will be asking you eight questions. I'd like to inform you that this interview is being recorded to ensure the meeting's accuracy. As mentioned previously, this recording will be stored on a password-protected computer and transcribed afterward. After three years, all data will be destroyed.

Will you now consent to the recording of this interview? (Yes/No)

1. How long has your agency had a chaplaincy program?
2. What do you believe is the strongest argument for having such a program?
3. Do you have a chaplaincy handbook? If so, may I use it for my research?
4. Is there an application for prospective chaplains to complete? If so, may I use it for my research?
5. Do you conduct a background check before enlisting chaplains?
6. Are your chaplains able to carry a weapon? If so, what is required of them to have one?
7. Is there a uniform for chaplains? If so, please describe it.
8. What does your department issue chaplains? (i.d. card, badge, radio, weapon, etc.)
9. Is there any required training before chaplains officially begin serving? If so, please describe this training?
10. What type of yearly chaplaincy training do you make available to help your present chaplains stay current in this field?
11. What is your program missing?

Appendix F

PROSPECTIVE CHAPLAIN RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Pastor:

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 study is to help establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. I am inviting you to participate in this research study because you are known for your zeal for God and desire to minister to others.

To participate, you must have served in the gospel ministry for at least three years and currently serving a church in Cullman County. Participating in this research project is voluntary and will last four to five months. Please take time to read the enclosed Prospective Chaplain Consent Form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research. Participants willing to participate in this project will be asked to consent to a forty-five to sixty-minute interview. This interview will be either in person, Zoom, or via phone. It will around ten questions. In addition, you will be required to attend a one-day chaplaincy training at the CCSO. Please look over the enclosed questions so you may be prepared when interviewed.

To participate, please read and sign the attached consent form within ten days. Upon completing this form, please email it to (email deleted).

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain, Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Appendix G

PROSPECTIVE CHAPLAIN PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office.

Principal Researcher: Matthew W. Smith, MDiv., Th.M., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity.

Invitation to be part of a research study
--

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Have served a minimum of 3 years in the ministry and currently serve in a church within Cullman County, AL.
3. Possess an ecclesiastical endorsement from the church you serve.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

The purpose of the study is to help address the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of sworn and non-sworn personnel at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in Cullman, Alabama. The law enforcement profession is extremely stressful. Unfortunately, many do not handle stress well or do not have a trusted chaplain to confide in and suffer from depression, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, and divorce. It is believed that if a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed, then these trends can be minimized.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Participate in a personal interview not to exceed one hour. During our meeting, you will be asked questions about your salvation experience, calling to the gospel ministry, and your interest in serving as a chaplain within the CCSO. The interview will be either in person, Zoom or via phone. This interview will be recorded and a transcription made. Data used from this interview will not include any of your personal information.
2. Attend the one-day chaplaincy training at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office Training Center. This training will include four sessions and will last approximately seven hours.
3. Complete a survey following the training.
4. Agree to review the audio recording transcription that took place during our meeting and check it for accuracy. If you believe you were misunderstood, please make corrections and email them to me.
5. The study will last approximately three to four months.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Direct Benefits: The benefits of participating in this study are:

1. A better understanding of law enforcement and the great need for a chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO.
2. A general background of law enforcement and the struggles deputies often face.
3. Equipped to assist the needs of deputies and other law enforcement personnel.

Benefits to Society: Benefits to society include having law enforcement personnel serving their communities who know they are supported and have a trusted chaplain to turn to for counsel during difficult times.

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. However, in some situations, prospective chaplains may be convicted due to the knowledge that certain aspects of their personal walk with Christ are lacking. As a result, some may be challenged to grow in their relationship with Christ before becoming a chaplain.

Mandatory Reporting Disclaimer: If you share evidence or suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or the desire to hurt oneself or others, this researcher has an ethical obligation to report the information to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The published reports will contain no information that could be used to identify participants. The researcher's study records will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to them. Your data may be shared with other researchers or used in future research studies. If data acquired from you is shared, any information that could be used to identify you will be erased.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes. Interviews will be conducted where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be initially stored on a password-protected computer and may be used in subsequent presentations. Individually identifiable information will be securely saved on a password-protected, encrypted data storage device. All data will be erased three years after it is collected.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be saved on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. However, while discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

Proper steps have been made to ensure that no participant incurs a cost. Therefore, participants will be provided with all necessary materials at no charge.

Is study participation voluntary and will I be compensated?

Participation in this study is voluntary; so no compensation is provided. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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 decide 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 Matthew W. Smith. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via phone (deleted) or his email (deleted). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Darren Hercyk, 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 (deleted).

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your 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.

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 all meetings via audio or video as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix H

PROSPECTIVE CHAPLAIN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PRE-TRAINING)

1. Why do you wish to serve as a chaplain for the CCSO?

2. What do you understand is the role of a law enforcement chaplain?

3. List some of the personal battles you believe law enforcement struggle with.

4. Why do you believe having a chaplaincy ministry at the CCSO is important?

5. What is the most significant contribution you bring to the CCSO Chaplaincy Team?

6. Roughly, how many death notifications have you delivered, and are you adequately trained in this area? Please explain why you feel equipped or not equipped to conduct this task.

Appendix I

DEPUTY RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Deputy:

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 study is to help establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. As a result, I am inviting you to participate in this research project. I believe you will be a great resource as I conduct my study. The insights gleaned from you, and other deputies will be instrumental in establishing this ministry.

To participate in this research study, you must be at least 18 years old and have been employed for a minimum of six years at the Sheriff's Office. This research project is voluntary and will last roughly three to four months. Please take time to read the enclosed Consent Form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research. Participants willing to participate in this project will be asked to consent to a forty-five to sixty-minute interview. This interview will be either in person, Zoom, or via phone. It will ask eight to twelve questions. If interested in being a voice in this study, please look over the enclosed questions so you may be prepared when interviewed.

To participate, please read and sign the attached consent form within seven days. Upon completing this form, please email it to (deleted).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this study. I look forward to meeting with you and learning from your experiences.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain, Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Appendix J

DEPUTY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office.

Principal Researcher: Matthew W. Smith, MDiv., Th.M., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

Invitation to be part of a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be actively serving as a deputy within the Cullman County Sheriff's Office and have been employed for a minimum of six years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

The purpose of the study is to help meet the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of sworn and non-sworn personnel at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in Cullman, Alabama. The law enforcement profession is extremely stressful. Unfortunately, many do not handle stress well and suffer from depression, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, and divorce. It is believed that if a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed, then these trends can be minimized.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

Agree to meet with this researcher for an interview not to exceed one hour. During our meeting, you will be asked questions about the issues that you believe deputies struggle with and how a chaplaincy ministry may alleviate these. The interview will be either in person, Zoom, or via phone. This interview will be recorded and a transcription made. Data used from this interview will not include any of your personal information.

Agree to make yourself available for a possible follow-up meeting by phone or in person.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Other than knowing that you are helping the Cullman County Sheriff's Office to develop a successful chaplaincy ministry, participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include having law enforcement personnel serving their communities who know they are supported.

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. However, in some situations, deputies may feel uncomfortable due to having to be transparent in this interview. As a result, some may choose not to participate.

If you share evidence or suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or the desire to hurt oneself or others, this researcher has an ethical obligation to report the information to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The published reports will contain no information that could be used to identify participants. The researcher's study records will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to them. Your data may be shared with other researchers or used in future research studies. If data acquired from you is shared, any information that could be used to identify you will be erased.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes. Interviews will be conducted where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be initially stored on a password-protected computer and may be used in subsequent presentations. Individually identifiable information will be securely saved on a password-protected, encrypted data storage device. All data will be erased three years after it is collected.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be saved on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. However, while discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this voluntary study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time

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 decide 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 Matthew W. Smith. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via phone (deleted) or his email (deleted). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor Dr. Darren Hercyk.

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 (deleted).

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above. *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 all meetings via audio or video as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Please respond by email within 7 days.

Signature & Date

Appendix K

DEPUTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PRE-TRAINING)

As a deputy who has served the CCSO for at least six years, you have decided to participate in this study. I will be asking you a series of questions during our time together. It is crucial that you answer each one truthfully. I'd like to inform you that this interview is being recorded to ensure the meeting's accuracy. As mentioned, this recording will be stored on a password-protected computer and transcribed afterward. Once this meeting has been transcribed, you will be asked to check the contents for accuracy. If any changes need to be made, please notify me by email. After three years, all data will be destroyed.

Will you now consent to the recording of this interview? (Yes/No)

1. What have been the strengths of chaplaincy programs in past years at the CCSO?
2. Share a story when a chaplain helped you during a difficult situation.
3. What have been the weaknesses of our chaplaincy program?
4. Tell of a time when you wished a chaplain was available to assist you.
5. What can chaplains do to be more visible?
6. Statistics reveal that there is a high rate of suicide among law enforcement. How can chaplains assist in keeping this from being an issue at the CCSO?
7. How can chaplains relieve deputies from being overcome by the stresses of their work?
8. Overall, the divorce rate in our profession is high. So, how can chaplains help deputies build healthy relationships with their spouses?
9. What's the most needed service you'd like to see our future chaplaincy ministry offer?
10. What dos and do nots would you like to see communicated to chaplains when on a ride-along with deputies?
11. Why did you choose a law enforcement career?

Appendix L

DEPUTY RATING SCALE
(Pre-Chaplaincy Training)

Instructions: Please read the ten statements below and choose the response that best corresponds with your feelings about the statement.

1. I effectively handle the stress factors of my job.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
2. My work-related experiences sometimes cause anxiety and depression.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
3. Our chaplains genuinely care about me and other deputies/employees.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
4. Chaplains are highly visible and accessible.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
5. I'm comfortable calling a chaplain for advice if I need to talk to someone confidentially.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
6. During times of crisis, chaplains provide a consoling presence.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
7. I feel confident asking a chaplain to pray for me or someone else.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
8. A chaplain has personally ministered to me in the last six months.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
9. I intend to retire from law enforcement after serving 25 years.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
10. Chaplains are an invaluable resource to the sheriff's office.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Appendix M

FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT EMAIL

To Command Staff Leaders Within the Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Dear Command Staff Leaders:

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 study is to help establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. Therefore, I am reaching out to you because you are the backbone of our Sheriff's Office. You have much wisdom to offer and will be a great sounding board as I conduct my study.

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must actively serve the CCSO. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read the enclosed Consent Form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research. Participants willing to participate in this project will be asked to consent to a forty-five to sixty-minute interview. This interview will be either in person or via Zoom. It will ask eight to twelve questions. If interested in being a voice in this study, please look over the enclosed questions so you may be prepared when interviewed.

To participate, please read and sign the attached consent form. Upon completing this form, please email it to (deleted) within 7 days.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I look forward to meeting with you and learning from your experiences.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Smith
Lead Chaplain, Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Appendix N

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office.

Principal Researcher: Matthew W. Smith, MDiv., Th.M., Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University School of Divinity

Invitation to be part of a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Currently serve within the CCSO Command Staff.
3. Have been employed for a minimum of six years.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

The purpose of the study is to help address the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of sworn and non-sworn personnel at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in Cullman, Alabama. The law enforcement profession is extremely stressful. Unfortunately, many do not handle stress well or do not have a trusted chaplain to confide in and suffer from depression, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, and divorce. It is believed that if a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry is developed, then these trends can be minimized.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Agree to meet with this researcher and other command staff personnel for a group interview not to exceed two hours. During our meeting, you will be asked questions about the issues you believe deputies struggle with and how a chaplaincy ministry may alleviate these. The interview will be conducted either in person, Zoom, or via phone. This interview will be recorded and a transcription made. Data used from this interview will not include any of your personal information.
2. Review the audio recording transcription that took place during our meeting and check it for accuracy. If you believe you were misunderstood, please make corrections and email them to me (deleted).
3. Agree to make yourself available for a possible follow-up meeting that will not exceed one hour. This meeting will be conducted either in person, Zoom or via phone.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Direct Benefits: The benefits of participating in this study are:

1. A broader understanding of law enforcement chaplaincy ministry.
2. Greater knowledge of the services chaplains provide.

3. An extensive awareness of the struggles deputies battle at work and in their personal lives.
4. Direct input in helping establish a comprehensive chaplaincy ministry within the CCSO.

Benefits to Society: Benefits to society include having law enforcement personnel serving their communities who know they are supported and have a trusted chaplain to turn to for counsel during difficult times.

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. However, in some situations, command staff personnel may feel uncomfortable due to being transparent in this interview. In addition, some questions may cause suppressed emotions to resurface, causing anxiety and depression. As a result, command staff personnel may choose not to participate.

Mandatory Reporting Disclaimer: If you share evidence or suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or the desire to hurt oneself or others, this researcher has an ethical obligation to report the information to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The published reports will contain no information that could be used to identify participants. The researcher's study records will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to them. Your data may be shared with other researchers or used in future research studies. If data acquired from you is shared, any information used to identify you will be erased.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms or codes. Interviews will be conducted where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be initially stored on a password-protected computer and may be used in subsequent presentations. Individually identifiable information will be securely saved on a password-protected, encrypted data storage device. All data will be erased three years after it is collected.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be saved on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. However, while discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

There are no financial obligations to be involved in this study. The only cost to participate is your time.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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 decide 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 Matthew W. Smith. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via phone (deleted) or his email (deleted). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Darren Hercyk, 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 (deleted).

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

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 all meetings via audio or video as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix O

PRE-TRAINING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

You have decided to participate in this study as the Command Staff leaders of the CCSO. As a result, I will be asking you eight questions. I'd like to inform you that this interview is being recorded to ensure the meeting's accuracy. As mentioned previously, this recording will be stored on a password-protected computer and transcribed afterward. After three years, all data will be destroyed.

Will you now consent to the recording of this interview? (Yes/No)

Interview questions:

1. What qualifications do you believe are essential for perspective CCSO Chaplains?
2. How can we help equip chaplains to be effective?
3. What do you believe is the most significant benefit of having a chaplaincy ministry?
4. What pitfalls do you perceive of having such a program?
5. How can we hold chaplains accountable for fulfilling their duties?
6. What do you perceive as the best way for chaplains to build relationships with deputies?
7. What are the benefits and drawbacks of sworn deputies serving as chaplains?
8. How can our chaplaincy ministry differ from others and one desired to be emulated?

Appendix P

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (POST-TRAINING)

You have decided to participate in this study as the Command Staff leaders of the CCSO. As a result, I will be asking you eight questions. I'd like to inform you that this interview is being recorded to ensure the meeting's accuracy. As mentioned previously, this recording will be stored on a password-protected computer and transcribed afterward. After three years, all data will be destroyed.

Will you now consent to the recording of this interview? (Yes/No)

Interview questions:


1. What improvements have you noticed in the chaplaincy ministry?
2. Do you believe that chaplains are more accessible now?
3. How has a chaplain ministered to you in the last three months?
4. What areas of improvements could still be made in our chaplaincy ministry?
5. Do you have anything else you'd like to comment about?

Appendix Q

LAW ENFORCEMENT CHAPLAINCY TEACHING MATERIALS

Session One:


An Introduction to Law Enforcement Chaplaincy



1

Session Objectives

- Uncover the OT & NT theological framework of law enforcement chaplaincy
- Discover the origins of US LEO chaplaincy
- Chaplain duties
- Establishment of the ICPC
- Realize the personal battles of LEOs
- Understand the need for LEO chaplains




2

Theological Foundations for Law Enforcement Chaplaincy

Old Testament Examples: Deuteronomy 20:2-4
The Priest


And When you draw near to battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people and shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for Battle against your enemies: let not your Heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is he who goes with You to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory. Deuteronomy 20:2-4



3

A Direct Fourfold Exhortation:


- **Don't Be Timid**
- **Don't Be Fearful**
- **Don't Be Terrified**
- **Don't Succumb to Panic**



4

Theological Foundations for Law Enforcement Chaplaincy


Old Testament Examples:
Exodus 14:10-14
Moses



5

¹⁰When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. ¹¹They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?"

¹²Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." ¹³And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you."



6

Moses' Instructions

- Fear Not
- Stand Firm (Trust God)
- The Lord Fights for You



7

Theological Foundations for Law Enforcement Chaplaincy

New Testament Examples:
John 4:1-42
Jesus and the Samaritan Woman



8

Jesus Exercised Chaplaincy Ministry

He came to her
He showed her love and compassion
He did not condemn her
He offered hope



9

Theological Foundations for Law Enforcement Chaplaincy

New Testament Examples:
Matthew 8:5-13
Jesus and the Roman Centurion's Servant



10

⁹When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ¹⁰"Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." ¹¹And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." ¹²But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ¹³For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁴When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹⁵I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹⁶while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹⁷And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Matthew 8:5-13



11

The Role of the Centurion Was Like That of A Modern-Day LEO.

- He enforced discipline and executive orders.
- He was responsible for at least 100 troops.
- He was responsible for establishing peace



12

Jesus Connected With & Met the Centurion's Need

- He earned the Centurion's trust
- He was moved by his faith and compassion
- He healed his servant



13

U.S. Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Origins



NYPD – February 8, 1906
Commissioner Theodore A. Bingham



14

Duties of First LEO Chaplains

- **Serve As Spiritual Advisors**
- **Visit the Sick**
- **Visit the Injured**
- **Visit the Dying**



15

The 1908 NYPD Annual Report

- Chaplains are an invaluable aid to the Police Commissioner and men.
- They're able to give strong moral support to the men who would be a good Policemen except for a natural moral weakness.



16

The 1920 NYPD Annual Report

- **2, 550 Hospital Visits Made by Chaplains**
- **300 Visits Made b/c of Death in LEOs Families**
- **85 Funeral Services for Deceased Officers**



17




Founded by CH. Joseph Dooley 1973



18

Founding Goals of the ICPC


- Compile A Directory of Chaplains.
- Provide A Bond of Brotherhood & Training for Law Enforcement Chaplains.



19

The Need for Law Enforcement Chaplains

- On Average LEOs Experiences 188 Critical Incidents During Their Career
- The Average Person 7 In A Lifetime




20

Critical Incident:

“The range of physical and psychological symptoms that might be experienced by someone as a result of being involved in a traumatic critical incident.”

Jeffrey Mitchell




21

Critical Incident:

“Any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later.”


Jeffrey Mitchell



22

Personal Issues LEOs Battle


- Officer involved shooting
- Severe trauma or death of a child
- Vehicle accident involving serious injury or death to individuals
- Death of a colleague
- Near death situations
- Incident involving multiple deaths or injuries in a short amount of time



23

Additional Critical Incidents:

- Job Related Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol Abuse
- Suicide



24

Session Two:

**Understanding The Chaplain's
Purpose & Ride-Alongs**



1

Session Objectives

- Define the purpose and role of a LEO Chaplain
- Reveal the qualities needed in a chaplain
- Discover the benefits of conducting ride-alongs
- Discuss the do's and don'ts of ride-alongs



2

The Chaplain's Purpose

A CCSO chaplain is to be an encourager by ministering to the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of deputies, office personnel, and their families. This role will only be met through prayer, a Christ-like witness, a steady presence, and persistence in building relationships.



3

The Chaplain's Role

- Provide a ministry of presence.
- Foster healthy relationships with deputies. Ride-Alongs build relationships.
- Reduce the deputy's stress.
- Offer spiritual support & wise counsel.
- Be a Christ-like example.



4

Qualities Desired In A Chaplain

F aithful
A vailable
T eachable



5

Qualities Desired In A Chaplain

- **Servant's heart**
- **Listening ear**
- **Flexibility**
- **Confidentiality**
- **No LEO wannabes**
- **Genuine interest in building relationships**



6

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Theodore Roosevelt



7

Benefits of Ride-Alongs

- You’re exposed to the stressors of law enforcement.
- You learn what makes deputies tick.
- You allow deputies to know you.
- You give deputies the chance to share their struggles and challenges.
- You gain the acceptance and trust of deputies.



8

The Do’s and Don’ts of Ride-Alongs

- If you’re sick, stay home.
- Shower and groom your hair before arriving at the CCSO.
- Call dispatch ahead of time and let them know you’d like to go on a ride-along.
- Ensure your clothes are clean and neat, including shoes. Always wear a chaplain shirt, and carry your ID.



9

The Do’s and Don’ts of Ride-Alongs

- Learn the meaning of popular 10 codes.
- Put your phone on vibrate, and do not use it.
- Do not touch police equipment.
- Do not eat in the deputies vehicle.
- Do not talk while the deputy is on the phone or radio.
- Always follow the deputies instructions.
- Do not exit the car unless instructed by the deputy.



10

Helpful ride-along discussion starters

- Do you mind if I pray before we leave?
- How long have you been in law enforcement?
- Do you enjoy working for the sheriff’s office?
- Tell me about your family.
- At the end of your ride-along, ask how you can pray for them.



11


“In God we trust, in others we search.”

LEO Saying




12

Session Three:
**The Proper Way to Deliver
Death Notifications**




1

Session Objectives

- Equip chaplains to effectively deliver death notifications.
 - Talk about different types of notifications.
 - List needed information before delivering these notifications.
 - Discuss the method of delivering death notifications.
 - What to say and what not to say.
 - Reactions to death notifications.
- 


2

Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by law enforcement officers and chaplains, because learning of the death of a loved one often s the most traumatic event in a person's life. The moment of notification is one that most people remember painfully and vividly for the rest of their life.



3


Types of Death Notifications

- Traffic Accident
 - Suicide
 - Homicide
 - SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome)
 - Natural causes
 - Inmate
- 

4


Before Delivering Death Notification

As quickly as possible, collect all pertinent information.

- Who?
 - How?
 - Where?
 - When?
- 

5

Before Delivering Death Notification

- Know where to contact the next of kin.
 - What is this person's relationship with the deceased?
 - Are there any special circumstances (physical or mental)? If talking to an inmate, you may want them handcuffed. You can always ask for them to be removed once you feel you're safe.
- 

6

Mode of Death Notification

- In Person
- In Time—With Certainty
- In Pairs
- In Plain Language
- With Compassion



7

What Not to Say

- I know how you feel.
- It must have been their time.
- You must continue on with life.
- God never gives you more than you can handle



8

What Not to Say

- You will get over this one day.
- Someday you will understand why this happened.
- He never knew what hit him.
- Only the good die young.
- God must have needed him more than you.



9


What to Say

- I am sorry for your loss.
- May I pray for you?
- Is there someone I can call for you? (Pastor, friend, or neighbor)
- Remember: Sometimes it is better just to listen and not speak.




10

Session Four:
**The Different Divisions of
the Cullman County
Sheriff's Office**



1

- Session Objectives**
- Recognize the divisions.
 - identify leadership in each division.
 - Tour all divisions.
- 

2

CCSO Leaders

Sheriff: Matt Gentry

Chief Deputy: Brett Holmes

Major: Matt Hogue



3

Administration Leaders

Leader: Chief Clerk Delitha Poag
Capt. Rex Sorrow


Lt. John Ballow, Fleet Manager
Lt. Rebecca Cash, Technology
Lt. Chad Whaley, Communications



4

Detention Center:

Leader: Capt. Kelly Allen




5

Patrol

Leader: Capt. Ricky Blackwood

Lt. Trevor Clemmons
Lt. Trevor Clemmons
Lt. Joey Collier
Lt. Daniel Cummings
Lt. Pat Thompson




6

Investigation:

Leader: Capt. Phillip Harris

Lt. Jared Aaron



7

SROs:


Leader: Lt. Doug Duke



8

Courthouse Security:


Leader: Sgt. Jacob Gable



9

Dispatch:


Leader: Lt. Amber Smith



10

Victim Services:

Leader: Capt. Ed Potter



11

Appendix R

PROSPECTIVE CHAPLAIN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (POST-TRAINING)

1. Has this chaplaincy training discouraged or encouraged you to serve as a chaplain for the CCSO? Please explain your answer.

2. How has your understanding of the role of a law enforcement chaplain changed?

3. What was your favorite chaplaincy training session, and why?

4. List any recommendations for future introductory chaplaincy training sessions.

5. Are you ready to serve as a CCSO Chaplain? Yes or No

Appendix S

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

Church or Denomination Office Letterhead

Address

City, ST Zip

Phone Number

Current Date

Cullman County Sheriff's Office
1910 Beech Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055

RE: Chaplain's First and Last Name

To Whom It May Concern:

Chaplain/First and Last Name currently serves at (Church Name) and is supported in their law enforcement ministry. In this section it's important to convey that the church fully supports your desire to serve as a CCSO Chaplain.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Full Name of
Pastor/Deacon Chairman/Elder/Board Member

Appendix T

CHAPLAIN QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

A chaplain must be an ordained, ecclesiastically certified individual in good standing and endorsed by a recognized religious body for law enforcement chaplaincy. Additionally, they must have at least five years of ministry experience and currently serve in Cullman County.

A chaplain must have never been convicted of a criminal offense or offenses involving immorality.

A chaplain must be willing to be carefully screened by the chaplaincy leadership team or appointed authorities within the CCSO.

A chaplain must be available to serve on a 24-hour call basis, determined and governed by the lead chaplain and appointed authorities within the CCSO.

A chaplain must manifest a broad base of experience and professional ministry, emotional stability, and personal flexibility.

A chaplain must be discreet, considerate, and professional in approaching everyone regardless of race, sex, creed, or religion.

A chaplain must be willing to participate in training programs to improve their efficiency in assisting people in crisis. In addition, they should be familiar with community medical, psychiatric, and other helpful resources.

A chaplain must understand that counseling is an “off the record,” “privileged” communication. It will not be reported to anyone’s superior or affect their job status. This element of confidentiality is critical to the overall effectiveness of the chaplain and their rapport with the men and women of the CCSO.

A chaplain must complete the introductory chaplaincy training taught by the lead chaplain to serve in an official capacity.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Make every opportunity to be visible and active among deputies and staff by serving at least 6 hours a month, including one ride-along.

Assist with making death notifications.

Be available to lead prayer at Command Staff Meetings and special events as called upon by the lead chaplain or appointed authorities within the CCSO.

Attend semi-annual meetings with the sheriff and special called chaplain meetings unless sick or providentially hindered. Every effort must be made to contact the lead chaplain if you cannot attend.

Be willing to counsel deputies and other staff members.

Visit sick or injured deputies and staff in homes & hospitals.

Attend funerals of deputies/staff or immediate family members.

Assist victims, transients, and the homeless.

Make a two-year commitment.

Consent to a background check.

Successfully complete a three-month probation period.

I understand and agree with the qualifications and responsibilities of serving as a Cullman County Sheriff's Office Chaplain. If, at any time, I cannot meet these expectations, I will willingly step down from my position. I also understand that if I resign or am terminated from my responsibilities, I will return my CCSO ID Card, badge, shirts, etc. (issued or bought personally) while serving as a chaplain.

Chaplain's Signature

Date

Appendix U

DEPUTY RATING SCALE

(Post-Chaplaincy Training)

Instructions: Please read the ten statements below and choose the response that best corresponds with your feelings about the statement.

1. I effectively handle the stress factors of my job.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. My work-related experiences sometimes cause anxiety and depression.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. Our chaplains genuinely care about me and other deputies/employees.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. Chaplains are highly visible and accessible.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. I'm comfortable calling a chaplain for advice if I need to speak with someone confidentially.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. During times of crisis, chaplains provide a consoling presence.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

7. I feel confident asking a chaplain to pray for me or someone else.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

8. A chaplain has personally ministered to me in the last three months.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

9. I intend to retire from law enforcement after serving 25 years.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

10. Chaplains are an invaluable resource to the sheriff's office.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree/Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Appendix V

DEPUTY QUESTIONS (POST-TRAINING)

As a deputy who has served the CCSO for at least six years, you have decided to participate in this study. I will be asking you a series of questions during our time together. It is crucial that you answer each one truthfully. I'd like to inform you that this interview is being recorded to ensure the meeting's accuracy. As mentioned, this recording will be stored on a password-protected computer and transcribed afterward. Once this meeting has been transcribed, you will be asked to check the contents for accuracy. If any changes need to be made, please notify me by email. After three years, all data will be destroyed.

Will you now consent to the recording of this interview? (Yes/No)

1. What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses you see in the chaplaincy ministry?
2. Has your perception of the chaplaincy ministry changed since the training this summer? Explain your answer.
3. Has a chaplain ministered to you personally in the past three months? If so, please share your experience.
4. How can we make our chaplaincy ministry better?
5. Do you believe the chaplaincy ministry is an asset to the CCSO? If so, why or why not?

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 15, 2022

Matthew Smith
Darren Hercyk

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21–22–760 Equipping Local Pastors to Develop a Comprehensive
Chaplaincy Ministry for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Dear Matthew Smith and Darren Hercyk,

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 does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not “designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

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

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at (deleted).

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