CHAPLAINCY, MISSION AND ELITE SPORT:

A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF THE WORK OF CHAPLAINS IN THE

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NFL) AND ENGLISH PREMIER

LEAGUE (EPL)

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A thesis submitted to The University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Sport and Exercise.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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Signed: Date: 6 July 2021

Abstract

Background:

Sports chaplaincy is an established form of chaplaincy and ministry. However, little research has been conducted on the work of sports chaplains. Of the completed research, none has compared sports chaplaincy in different countries.

Aim and methods:

The aim of the present study is to compare and contrast the role and function of sports chaplains within American football's National Football League (NFL) and the English Premier League (EPL) by way of qualitative empirical investigation. The study sought to understand the roles and skills of the sports chaplain, the governance and safeguarding structures chaplain's operate within, and the missiological approach to this form of ministry.

To investigate these elements, a qualitive approach was utilized. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews, participant observations and e-mail. Eight chaplains, four from each league, participated in the study, as well as two para-church organization leaders, from the US and UK respectively.

The results showed that sports chaplains fulfilled roles comparable to chaplains within other sectors of chaplaincy, such as offering pastoral care and spiritual support. However, their work was contextual, in that how their roles were utilized differed between host organizations. Overall, chaplains felt marginalized in their work, but this position also allowed chaplains to provide support during times of challenge. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that accountability and evaluation mechanisms for sports chaplains were not consistent and safeguarding mechanisms for NFL chaplains were nonexistent. Finally, chaplains consistently expressed a calling to this form of ministry and felt that their work was a witness to the love and message of Jesus Christ.

Conclusions:

In the high-pressure, results oriented industry of elite sports settings, sports chaplains witness to the love of God and affirm the value of the individual, regardless of their performance or on-field results. In this, they witness to the *missio Dei* present in elite sport.

Publications

Academic Journals

Whitmore, W. (2018). "The branch is linked to the vine: Personal discipleship and the *Missio*

Dei." International Review of Mission, 107(2), 472-482.

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Whitmore, W. & Parker, A. (2020). Towards a theology of sports chaplaincy*, Practical*

Theology, *13*(5), 493-503. https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1730566

Conference Presentations

Whitmore, W. & Parker, A. (2021) *A Shared Tasked: Sports chaplaincy and the need for a*

communal approach to accountability. Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture, Waco,

Texas.

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Whitmore, W. (2019). *Researching Christianity in elite sports settings: Sport, chaplaincy*

and qualitative enquiry. Currents, Perspectives, and Ethnographic Methodologies in

World Christianity, Princeton, NJ.

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trump despair and hardship. To our 'to be expected'- I am so excited to share this life with you

and finish this Ph.D. before you arrive. I love you four so much.

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For Kristen,
Your love pushes, inspires and comforts me. Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself, for celebrating the milestones when I would not, and editing so much of this work.
I love you.

List of Abbreviations and Tables

Abbreviations

ACPE: Association of Clinical Pastoral Education

AIA: Athletes in Action

BSA: British Sociological Association

CPE: Clinical Pastoral Education

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Services

EFL: English Football League

EPL: English Premier League

EPPP: Elite Player Performance Plan

FCA: Fellowship of Christian Athletes

GSCA: Global Sports Chaplaincy Association

NFL: National Football League

PFA: Professional Footballers Association

SCORE: Sports Chaplains Offering Resources and Encouragement

SCUK: Sports Chaplaincy UK

UK: United Kingdom

US: United States

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Tables

Chapter One:

Introduction

Vignette
On a cold January night in 2017, I entered the grounds of Wimfield United for an English Premier League match. Two weeks beforehand, Lewis Sherwood, the club chaplain, informed me that he had secured a ticket for me and that I could 'shadow' him while he went through his pre-match routine with the players and staff. We had been in the stadium for almost an hour when we sat down to dinner in a hospitality suite with a table of 'regulars'. After our orders were taken, I pulled out my notebook to jot down some thoughts and reflections. As I scribbled frantically, the gentleman next to me asked, "So Will, are you a journalist?" A very understandable deduction, I informed him that I was not a member of the media but a Ph.D. student studying sports chaplains serving in elite sports settings. "Really? I had no idea there was such a thing," he replied. This kind of retort, or something similar, was the most consistent reaction that I got from people throughout the course of my research. Few people know that sports chaplaincy is a ministry, and even fewer are aware that it as an academic subject.

1.0 An emerging field

As an emerging area of academic inquiry, sports chaplaincy is still a field in need of rigorous study. Indeed, within the subject area, there has been relatively little qualitative research (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Gamble et al., 2013; Oliver & Parker, 2019; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010) or theoretical/theological writing (Hoven, 2016; Jones et al., 2020; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2013c; Waller, 2016, 2021; Waller and Cottom, 2016) to date. Parker, Watson and White's (2016) edited volume combines practitioner and theoretical analysis but features few examples of empirical research findings. This study seeks to serve as some form of corrective in this respect by providing a theoretically informed account of sports chaplaincy in elite sports settings, comparing and contrasting the role of sports chaplains in the National Football League (NFL) and the English Premier League (EPL). To this end, the study aims to fill various gaps in contemporary understandings of sports chaplaincy; specifically, addressing three previously untapped areas of investigation: (i) the missiological understanding

of sports chaplaincy; (ii) the cross-cultural study of sports chaplaincy; and (iii) the specific in-situ roles and skills of the sports chaplain.

1.1 Background literature

Previous literature on sports chaplaincy has primarily centered on practitioner accounts. While useful introductions to the field, these do not provide any theoretical or theological foundation for this particular ministry. Hoven (2016) places a theological framework around the practices of chaplains who serve sports by encouraging them to reflect theologically on their work. However, where Hoven encourages sports chaplains to reflect on their ministry practices, the current work seeks to demonstrate how sports chaplaincy is inherently missional. A wider corpus of literature has addressed the missional implications of chaplaincy per se (see Ballard, 2009; Dunlop, 2017; Todd et. al, 2014; Slater, 2012, 2015), but only Whitmore and Parker (2020) have spoken of how this manifests itself in sports chaplaincy. The present study seeks to provide a missiological lens through which sports chaplaincy can be understood whilst also providing a theological foundation for the practice. This theoretical component draws on broader social science literature and is supported by qualitative research.

To date, no qualitative study on sports chaplaincy has featured research subjects in two nations. Parker, Watson and White (2016) combine practitioner and theoretical analysis from across the globe, but do not compare and contrast chaplaincy in different geographic locations. As sports chaplaincy grows internationally, it is necessary to understand how this position manifests itself in different geographical locations. By adopting a cross-cultural perspective, this study seeks to not only assess how sports chaplains function in elite sports settings in the United Kingdom

(UK) and the United States (US) but also how the roles and skills of the sports chaplain vary

according to the specific contextual need and tasks in play.

While specific studies have touched upon the different skills needed to minister in elite sports

settings, this was not the primary focus of these studies. For example, Gamble et al. (2013)

identified pastoral care as a central task of the sports chaplain, yet, the primary focus of this

research was assessing the work of the sports chaplain in comparison to the sports psychologist

within EPL clubs, and how these two different groups might work together to provide holistic

care to their athletes. Focusing on the roles of the sports chaplain in different geographical

locations allows for the commonalties and differences of the position to manifest and provides

vital information to the field regarding what kind of tasks the sports chaplain might be expected

to undertake in elite sport.

1.2 Sports chaplaincy in elite sports settings in the US and UK

The origins of sports chaplaincy can be traced back to the convergence of two specific

phenomena: the rise of evangelical Christianity after the Second World War and the growth of

professional sports, specifically American football[1], during the same time period. After World

War II and into the 1950s, evangelical Christianity gained prominence and power. Through faith

revivals and other initiatives, Christian leaders, such as Billy Graham, brought the evangelical

message back into the mainstream of US culture (Carpenter, 1997). One specific area of focus

for evangelicals was reaching out to youth, and utilizing popular culture as a tool of outreach as

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[1] Given potential for confusion regarding which kind of 'football' is under discussion, the term 'American football' will be used to describe the code played in the NFL, and 'football' will refer to Association football played in the EPL.

opposed to a standing in opposition to it. Ladd and Mathison (1999) demonstrate that one way in which evangelical leaders used popular culture as a tool for religious outreach was through sport and spotlighting popular sporting figures who identified as evangelical Christian. Specifically, they sought to spiritually support athletes competing in elite sports, including those who competed on Sunday.

Playing in the NFL poses a problem for athletes who wish to attend religious services on Sunday as the majority of games occur on that day. This issue was identified in the 1950s by Bill Glass, a former professional American football player, who personally faced this challenge. To alleviate this issue, Glass began holding devotional services before games for his team, the Detroit Lions. During this same period head coaches Tom Landry, of the Dallas Cowboys, and Vince Lambordi, of the Green Bay Packers, promoted their athletes meeting for devotional services before games. This practice continued to spread throughout the NFL and by the 1970s all but one NFL team had a chaplain coordinating pre-game chapel services. Sports chaplains addressed the practical need of providing worship for those who could not attend a traditional Sunday service, but also provided pastoral and wider spiritual care and support to those connected to these sporting organizations. Sports chaplaincy was not confined to American football. Over time, it expanded to serve a wide range of elite and amateur sports in the US. While not on the same scale, it also began to emerge in the UK.

Sports chaplaincy's roots in the UK were not as closely tied to the rise of a specific religious movement. Chaplains began serving English football clubs in the 1960s and 1970s. The key figure in the field at that time was the Reverend John Boyers, a Baptist minister who began

serving Watford FC in 1977 before moving to Manchester United in 1992. Boyers founded organization called Sports Chaplains offering Resources and Encouragement (SCORE) in 1991, a para-church ministry that provided a network for sports chaplains in the UK. The organization transformed into Sports Chaplaincy UK (SCUK) in 2011, which now serves a wide range of sports in the UK and Ireland by aiding in coordination, training and support for sports chaplains. In 2015, there were over 320 sports chaplains serving in the UK with over two thirds of professional English football clubs having a sports chaplain's affiliated with Sports Chaplaincy UK (Boyers, 2016). As of 2021, there are roughly 600 chaplains who are members of the organization. In both locations, sports chaplaincy has seen a growth since the 1960s, with chaplains serving the majority of clubs, in some form or another, within both the EPL and NFL. In the interim period the individual leagues have also grown into two of the largest sporting competitions in the world.

1.3 The English Premier League

The English Premier League developed out of the former English First Division and was part of an overall restructuring of the professional game in the early 1990s. Launched in the 1992-1993 season, the league consists of twenty teams with the bottom three teams at the end of each season being regulated to second tier of English football, the English Football League (EFL) Championship. The Premier League has grown largely as a consequence of a business model which emphasizes revenue from global television deals and sponsorship alongside the strategic use of wider media. While true, Goldblatt (2014) argues that, since its inception, the political, social and economic climate of the UK has allowed for the Premier League to be successful. Goldblatt also contends that, in the intervening period, English professional football has

transformed from a game that was predominately working class to an elite status symbol. Like the UK itself, football (and particularly the Premier League) has become more diverse with larger influence from overseas athletes, coaches, owners and fans. This globalization process is entirely strategic, designed to promote and disseminate the League around the world.

In recent years, the popularity of the EPL has grown exponentially. In 2019, only five out of 193 countries recognized by the United Nations did not receive coverage of the Premier League.[2] The 2018-2019 season saw a 6% rise in viewership from the previous season, reaching an estimated 3.2 billion culminative global audience (Premier League, 2019). For the purposes of this study, it is important to note the growth of the League's financial power and international reach as these elements influence how clubs function and the role of the chaplain within those organizations. The EPL's notoriety and popularity make it the most prominent sporting competition in the UK.

1.4 The National Football League

It is hard to fully explain the importance of American football in the United States of America. It's influence and popularity can be seen throughout the nation, particularly in the autumn when it is played. The NFL is the highest-level American football competition. The league was formed in August 1920, but gained prominence and national popularity in the 1960s and 1970s when NFL Commissioner, Pete Rozzelle, used television, a revenue sharing business model and effective marketing to transform the competition into the premier sports league in country (MacCambridge, 2005). Currently, the NFL consists of thirty-two teams. There is no mechanism for relegation and teams have a business model in which television rights and revenue are shared

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[2] The five countries without EPL coverage during the 2018-2019 season were Afghanistan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, North Korea and Cuba.

by all clubs. As a result of this, the NFL has become the world's richest sports league. An example of the wealth of the league can be seen in the value of individual franchises. *Forbes* magazine's 2021 list of the fifty most valuable sports teams in the world featured twenty-five NFL teams, compared to five EPL clubs (Ozanian, 2021). Similar to the EPL, the NFL draws large viewing figures from a wide fan base. Nielson Ratings, which tracks television viewership in the United States, shows that the NFL is one of the most consistently watched TV programs in the US (Nielson, 2011, 2019a, 2019b). Similar to the EPL, revenue and viewership demonstrate the popularity and cultural significance of the NFL. This notoriety affects the organizations in the league and the individuals who serve within them. Even though issues regarding race and the safety of the game, particularly in relation to brain injuries, have impacted the reputation of the NFL it remains a focal point in American culture.[3] Combined, the NFL and EPL are two of the most influential and prominent professional sporting leagues in the world with chaplains serving the majority of organizations in both competitions. What these chaplaincy roles entail and how they function within their respective organizations is the focus of this study.

1.5 Summary

The aim of the study was to compare and contrast the role and function of sports chaplains within the NFL and the EPL by way of qualitative investigation. The study found that chaplains in both leagues complete similar roles in providing spiritual and pastoral care for the individuals and organizations they serve. Overall, chaplains practiced an incarnational form of pastoral care, emphasizing the importance of presence in their ministry. NFL chaplains were given the opportunity to fulfill explicitly religious duties associated with Christian ministry on a more

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[3] This brief mention is not to gloss over these systemic issues and critiques of the NFL or American football, per se; however, they are outside the scope and remit of this work.

consistent basis when compared to EPL chaplains, and this was often a requirement from their host organizations. Expectations for EPL and NFL chaplains were determined by the clubs themselves. Closely aligned with their expectations was the access to individuals in the organization and team facilities. For all chaplains, the terms of their interaction with the club and their members was set by the host organization. As a result, chaplains' duties and their ability to execute this work was dependent upon the access granted to them.

Overall, chaplains were peripheral within their host organizations, completing their work on the margins of club life. Sports chaplains are not alone in this. Pattison (2015) argues that marginality is a necessary aspect of all chaplaincy roles and this provides nuanced opportunies for chaplains to minister to those in their context. Chaplains within this study did not see their marginality as beneficial, but it did provide them with opportunities to serve the organization in specific ways. The study reveals that chaplain's marginality and limited expectations from host organizations provided barriers and challenges for those interviewed. However, the difficulties faced in ministry were weathered with a deep and abiding commitment to being a disciple of Jesus Christ and belief that they were personally 'called' to this form of ministry. This commitment and call were central to the witness of the sports chaplains and the missional role they fulfilled within their elite sports setting.

1.6 Thesis structure

Chapter two assesses the literature on sport and religion, locating sports chaplaincy as a growing field of inquiry. The chapter provides a brief overview of the wider sport and religion interface, recognizing that the majority of these texts address the interaction between sport and

Christianity, either historically or in contemporary settings. After analyzing these texts, the chapter moves to an in-depth interrogation of the sports chaplaincy specific literature. The chapter concludes that while the subfield of sports chaplaincy is growing, is in need of further academic writing and research.

Chapter three offers a theological, specifically missional, lens through which to view sports chaplaincy. As we have seen, to date little theological reflection has been given to sports chaplaincy (Hoven 2016), and this chapter seeks to address this issue. The chapter argues that sports chaplaincy is inherently missional. Grounding this missional lens in the Trinity, the chapter uses the work of Bosch (1992) on the *missio Dei* to suggest that sports chaplains are a medium by which the God's mission can be communicated.

Chapter four sets out the methodological approach taken in this study. This will include a discussion on the epistemological and ontological approaches of the work, as well as its cross-cultural nature. The chapter highlights how research participants were selected and the approaches employed to collect data before addressing why thematic analysis was utilized in the coding and analysis process. From this theoretical grounding, the work shifts to the research findings from the study.

Turning to the data findings themselves, chapter five focuses on of the roles and skills which sports chaplains in the study fulfilled at their host organizations. The data demonstrates that sports chaplains within the study fulfilled similar roles to other forms of chaplaincy, however, the specific tasks of the chaplain concerned varied by context. The extent to which chaplains

were able to fulfil these roles was predicated on the expectations of their host organizations and the level of access they were granted.

Chapter six analyzes chaplain's understandings of their expectations, or lack thereof, from the host organizations in relation to degrees of access. Access was not only about physical admission into a building or stadium, but also about the practicalities of time and to what extent chaplains had the freedom to interact with athletes. Respondent experiences were highly nuanced in this respect, varying widely depending on the context. Regardless of expectations or access, all chaplains within the study articulated a level of marginality.

Picking up on this theme, Chapter seven delves deeper into the way in which chaplains continually negotiated and re-negotiated their marginality within their respective organizations. Using the work of Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969), this chapter, argues that the chaplain fulfills Turner's notion of the *liminale personae* to bring about *communitas* in a group. Supporting previous research on the influence of authority figures within elite sports settings (Ferrin, 2008; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010), data findings demonstrate how the marginality of the chaplain was heavily dependent on the influence of the head coach or first team manager.

One area of marginalization for sports chaplains was a lack of accountability from host organizations and sending bodies. Chapter eight highlights the sports chaplain's understandings of accountability and what measures of accountability were present for respondents within the study. Data indicated that accountability for sports chaplains was inconsistent, with few (if any)

formal mechanisms or professional development expectations in place within host organizations. Furthermore, accountability and professional development from sending bodies was also minimal. The chapter concludes by suggesting that for sports chaplaincy to reach its full potential, professionally and missionally, accountability must be both present and consistent for all who work in the field.

Concluding the presentation of the empirical data findings, chapter nine, focuses on the role of discipleship within the ministerial and personal lives of sports chaplains. As a result of discussing discipleship, chaplain's verbalized their views on evangelism. Data suggest that chaplain's approached evangelism from an 'incarnational' perspective as opposed to a 'proclamational' viewpoint. The chapter concludes by examining at the importance of personal discipleship in the lives of sports chaplains, suggesting that personal discipleship is central to the *missio Dei* and the chaplain's public witness.

Chapter ten concludes the study, where summary remarks, overall observations and limitations of the study are addressed. Furthermore, avenues for future academic study and considerations for practitioners are addressed. It is important that suggestions for both academics and practitioners are identified, as this study has both theoretical and practical implications for the field.

With the continued decline of religious adherence and the shift to a post-Christendom worldview in western nations, such as the UK and the US, the work and ministry of chaplains continues to grow in importance. This ministry seeks to meet people outside traditional areas associated with

religion, and support them in their specific context within a community. In doing so, chaplains witness to the *missio Dei* that is present throughout the world. In the context of sport, chaplains serve as a witness to God's presence in an area of society that prioritizes performance and success. Sports chaplains provide pastoral and spiritual care to those within their host organizations. In elite sports settings, chaplains struggle to achieve these aims with limited expectations and access, often working from a place of marginality. However, even in their a liminal position, chaplains help their host organizations through challenging times. Throughout their work, sport's chaplains feel called to this ministry through their continuing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Whether serving in amateur or elite settings, the sports chaplain is located within an environment that often gains significant exposure and recognition across the broader social landscape. Yet, like those in other sectors and communities, the people of sport are in need of the *missio Dei* revealed to them in and through a relationship based not on their performance or ability, but on who they are as children of God. It is to this task that sports chaplains are called as key agents in the redemptive work of the living God.

Chapter Two:

Religion and Sport: An Overview

2.0 Introduction

To begin, it is necessary to address the relevant literature on sport and religion and sports

chaplaincy specifically. To accomplish this aim, the present chapter seeks to locate sports

chaplaincy within the wider sport and religion interface. It begins by mapping the wider sport

and religion literature, identifying two predominant approaches to the subject: a critical lens in

which sport and religions relationship is problematic, or a complimentary lens where sport and

religion are viewed as beneficial, and even natural, partners. After this, more specific attention is

given to literature on the relationship between sport and Christianity. To understand the breadth

of writing on this subject, academic, devotional and practitioner texts are highlighted. The

chapter then transitions to an exploration on the emerging body of work on sports chaplaincy.

This analysis will demonstrate how sports chaplaincy specific literature is primarily descriptive,

focusing on the role and function of the sports chaplain within their host organizations. The

chapter concludes by suggesting that more academic research and writing is needed on sports

chaplaincy to see the field reach its full potential.

2.1 The sport and religion interface

It is widely accepted that two of the most influential and seminal writings on the relationship

between sport and religion are Novak's (1976) *The Joys of Sports* and Deford's (1976a, 1976b,

1976c) three-part feature in *Sports Illustrated* focusing on how religion was present in elite

sports in the US. Although both authors focus on sport and religion, their work approaches the

subject from two different perspectives. Novak (1976), a Catholic author and philosopher,

produced the first systematic analysis of the sport and religion interface. While this was his only major contribution to the field it is no exaggeration to say that, in some form, much of the academic writing in this area has been built off this contribution.[4] In his monograph, Novak contends that sports should be considered a form of religion. He supports this by describing the ritualistic, sacrificial and spiritual elements of sport in the US. Novak identifies how sports resemble religion, with numerous similarities such as sacred time and space, ritualized atmospheres, adherents who invest emotionally, and the potential to develop the human spirit. At times, Novak is explicit in his vocabulary connecting the two, describing the liturgies of different sporting events and locating the athlete as both priest and eucharist, sacrificing themselves and making the sacrifice. In this, he contends that athletes serve as priests in offering the sacrifice for the wider community. Therefore, they carry the burden of the community who identity with a specific team or sport, facilitating the liturgical ritual on the field. However, not only do athletes function as the symbolic leader of this rite, they give their bodies as the sacrificial element of the ritual. By surrendering their own bodies, through injury and the physical toll of playing sport, they embody the hopes and dreams of the community. Novak is quick to note that sport is not a moral religion, as it does not promote a specific ethical code. Where Novak sees the religious ties to sport as a benefit, Deford is apprehensive about their interaction.

A renowned American sports journalist, Deford (1976a, 1976b, 1976c) took a critical approach to the relationship between sport and religion in the US, focusing on evangelical Christianity's relationship with elite sports. Deford was an iconic sports journalist, known for writing long

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[4] Interestingly, *The Joy of Sports* was Novak's only in-depth addition to the field. While he spoke at various conferences and contributed to academic journals and other publications, he did not produce another full length text on the subject.

form articles in *Sports Illustrated* and contributing to National Public Radio, who demonstrated how sport was more than just box scores and numbers, but engaged the human experience. Approaching the subject from a secular viewpoint, he contends that when wider US culture began to prioritize sport over church, evangelical Christians adapted to incorporate faith into sport. Deford does not provide a specific timetable for when this occured, rather his comments recognize the growing popularity of elite athletics and the diminishing influence of religion after the 1960s. Making his case in a three-part series that featured in consecutive issues of *Sports Illustrated,* Deford (1976a) argues that the cultural revolutions of the 1960s overlooked what he deems "the Sunday revolution", where elite level sports teams began to play on Sundays, shifting the day from one of worship and family to sports adherence and activity. Whilst not as prominent as other social movements of the 1960s, such as the Civil Rights or Feminist movements, for Deford, the Sunday revolution was one sign of the influence of sport and its growing position within the larger culture. To accommodate this shift, Deford (1976a) goes on, something of a new ideology emerged within Christianity that he termed "sportianity." Sportianity describes a person who professes a belief in Christianity, but does not, as a consequence, fundamentally change how they play sport. For those of such persuasion, the ethical dilemmas within sports, such as foul play or cheating, are not condemned. A significant emphasis within sportianity is the use of elite athletes to evangelize wider society. Deford (1976b) uses the language of business to emphasize this practice, contending that evangelical Christians desire elite athletes to peddle faith like a company sells a product (see also Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010). Consequently, sportianity focuses heavily on the promotion of Christian conversion as opposed to issues of social activism, such as initiatives surrounding social justice and equality, or spiritual renewal, like discipleship and the missional role of the local church not associated with

evangelism. Deford (1976c) sees this shift as problematic, and suggests that religion has not changed sport in the way that it may have hoped, but rather that sport has a tendency to bring out the worst in religion. Compared to Novak, Deford paints a bleak picture of the interaction between sport and religion. Others have followed Novak and Deford's respective analyses, arguing for or against the relationship between the two.

Where Novak (1976) is concerned, numerous writers have identified the various ways in which sport and religion may be seen to share traits (see, for example, Hoffman, 1992; Price, 2001a; Bain-Selbo, 2012; Scholes and Sassower, 2014; Bain-Selbo and Sapp, 2016; Schultz and Sheffer, 2016). While identifying the potential challenges in this relationship, all of these authors articulate the connection between sport and religion as something that is largely positive or, at least, natural. Approaching the subject from a US perspective, Price's (2001a) contributors focus on various popular sports in North America, and how they have connections to a range of religious or spiritual principles and practices. Chapters address issues such as ritual and myth in professional wrestling and liturgical nature of the US sports calendar. Adams (2001, 210), for example, argues that professional wrestling reenacts the "darker 'myths' of American society" by ritualizing them. Adams goes on to emphasize the theatrical history involved in professional wrestling, even suggesting that it is not battle, but a theatrical retelling of combat. His main example focuses on the xenophobic and racist storylines leading up to the World Wrestling Federation's WrestleMania 1993, in which a Japanese wrestler (who was actually Samoan) was portrayed as the 'bad guy' before losing to the 'true American' Hulk Hogan. Adam's argues that ritual reenactment of these storylines affirms the wider systemic racism of US society, providing a space for them to be continuously repeated and for their prominence to be reinforced. In turn,

Price (2001b) argues that the American sports calendar is liturgical in its ordering of life. He contends that various sporting events, such as baseball, American football, basketball and hockey are played in specific seasons of the year and due to this they serve as the various seasons of the liturgical calendar. The calendar is also marked by smaller celebrations, like golf's four major tournaments played each year, that are similar to feast days or other minor holidays. This rhythm creates a way of orienting a person through the mythology and narrative of each sport and the year as a whole. Price (2001b) notes that the sporting calendar does not correspond to a harvest schedule, but rather follows the natural calendar of the weather and seasons. This calendar, like a religious liturgical calendar, is mythic in the sense that it allows for the telling and retelling of the community's narrative through associations with various events over time, orienting the person or group to that period and season. These examples provide a brief overview of how Price's edited collection portrays the relationship of sport and religion as positive and/or natural.

Like Price (2001a), Scholes and Sassower (2014) address the similarities between sport and religion. They see the two as separate entities that are connected culturally, sharing many synergies in relation to language and the ability to help people find individual meaning. Using a post secular lens,[5] they argue that "sports can *displace* the exclusive centrality of religious institutions as the *only* backdrop for political and moral integrity" (Scholes and Sassower, 2014, p. 19, original italics). The authors claim that sports interact with ideas and actions that have typically been associated with religion and convey them in a manner that is more applicable to modern-day cultural norms. While this is a shift in the relationship between sport and religion, Scholes and Sassower suggest that both maintain their integrity. One example provided by the

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[5] Scholes and Sassower (2014) understand post-secular as the religious and the secular living alongside each other as opposed to one dominating the other.

authors is redemption. They contend that in sport and religion, errors are present and redemption is possible. In Christianity, redemption is achievable because of the salvific act of Jesus Christ dying on the cross. As a result of this, the believer can be reconnected to God if they confess their sins, recognizing their error and seeking forgiveness. Scholes and Sassower contend that seeking redemption in sport is not as straight-forward as in religion given that identity of the one who grants redemption is not as clearly defined as a specific deity. They proceed to argue that athletes make mistakes in their careers, be it while in competition, such as never winning a championship or causing a team to lose a pivotal contest or their off-field actions. Scholes and Sassower state that redemption often comes in the form of an athlete winning a competition or being accepted by a group (i.e, fans), who at one point rejected the athlete. One example used is Michael Vick, the NFL quarterback of the Atlanta Falcons who was convicted of leading a dog fighting ring in 2007 and, as a result, served eighteen months in federal prison and was suspended from the League. After completing his prison sentence, Vick returned to the NFL and worked with animal rights groups to condemn animal cruelty. While some will never forgive him for his actions, Scholes and Sassower note that Vick's actions and rhetoric after his prison sentence endeared him to a wide range of fans, causing him to be forgiven for his previous errors. The authors recognize that redemption is ambiguous in both realms, as there is no straightforward way for an athlete to redeem their career or public image, and religious redemption requires an act of faith on the part of the believer. Nevertheless, sport and religion share a common vocabulary and themes that manifest themselves in comparable ways. Redemption may take different forms in sport and religion, but in both realms it can be a tangible and powerful element of an individual or community's experience with this element of society. As a result of this, religion and sport are not only compatible but mirror each other in their ability

to provide meaning and structure for a community or individual. While these authors emphasize the positive connections between sport and religion others see the relationship between the two as problematic.

The primary critique of sport and religion, particularly in the US, has come from Robert Higgs, a retired literature professor. Higgs published on literature and sport (1981, 1982), before turning his attention to the sport-religion interface. Throughout his two treatise on the subject (Higgs, 1995; Higgs and Braswell, 2004) and via his key edited works (Higgs 1991, 2013), Higgs argues that the relationship between sport and religion lacks critique, and challenges how God, masculinity and sport have been combined in US popular culture. Specifically, he questions the role of Christianity in supporting these tropes and storylines. Higgs (1995) argues that the modern church and sport are in a symbiotic relationship, yet that they are not incompatible. To demonstrate this he lays out two archetypes of faith, the shepherd and the knight. He contends that the knightly vision of faith is favored by evangelical Christians who wed faith and sport throughout US history. In this image of sport, conquest and competition are used as ways to promote religion and relationship with the divine. According to Higgs, this is incompatible with the vision of the shepherd, which aligns with the message of the gospels. Using the archetype of the Good Shepherd, found in John 10, he contends that a shepherd seeks peace, only using violence in defense of the community, and does not pursue the heroism and victory associated with the knight. For Higgs, a shepherd mentality in sports prioritizes the community and its well-being, not conquest, violence and victory. While the parallels between faith and sport are recognized, Higgs does not see anything holy about sport or play. On the contrary, he explicitly challenges Novak's (1976) argument that sport is a natural religion, specifically describing

Novak's comments on the divine partaking in sport as "heretical" (Higgs, 1995, p. 19). In a later publication, Higgs (2013) opposes with the notion of promoting religion through sport. Using the concept of stereotype, the visible patterns or manners of culture, and archetype, those of the collective unconscious of the human race, he contends that the modern notion of witnessing to faith through sport prioritizes the stereotype over the archetype. Like Deford (1976b), Higgs sees this as a way in which sport serves as an advertisement for faith. When this occurs through overt evangelism and proselytization, Higgs argues that religion loses its claims to mystery, faith and wonder. Higgs is not critical of sport per se, although he spends little time promoting its positive elements, but consistently critiques the imprinting of religious narrative and symbolism into sport.

As demonstrated above, Novak (1976) and DeFord (1976a, 1976b, 1976c) approach the relationship between sport and religion from quite different perspectives. The contributions of both are beneficial, providing terminology and a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between sport and religion that others have built on over the past five decades. While these such arguments focus on the general relationship between sport and religion per se, they also highlight sport and religion's relationship with Christianity, a topic to which we now turn.[6]

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[6] The majority of scholarship in the sport and religion interface focuses on Christianity and its particular relationship with sport. Various publications highlight other faith's interaction with sport, i.e. historical accounts of Jewish involvement in English football (Clavane, 2013) and the sporting history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Kimball, 2003) have been published. Fink's (2016) monograph focuses on sport amongst American Muslims, while Hubbard (1998) and Alpert (2015) briefly describe the faith commitments of Muslim athletes in elite sports.

2.2 Sports and Christianity

Scholarship concerning the relationship between sport and Christianity can be differentiated into three primary categories, academic, devotional texts, and practitioner accounts. This section will briefly addresses the key works in these areas, before turning to a more substantive analysis of the literature focusing specifically on sports chaplaincy. An in-depth assessment of the field can be found in Watson and Parker's (2014) systematic review of the literature relating to Christianity and sport. This synthesis provides a foundation for the subject, offering a historical and comprehensive analysis of the literature. Not only do the authors map the field's historical and contemporary standing, they also provide a springboard into further study. Indeed, while other texts on the sport and religion interface have emerged since its publication, Watson and Parker (2014) is an essential read when seeking to comprehend the sport and Christianity interface in its entirety.

Related academic offerings cover a wide range of topics such as: theologies of sport (Dailey, 2018; Ellis, 2014; Harvey, 2014; Moltmann, 1972; Tucker and Halstead, 2021), Biblical models of play[7] (Habets, 2021; Johnston, 1997) and sport (Weir, 2000), Christian responses to doping (Schafer, 2014) and performance enhancement (Trothen, 2015), prayer and sport (Czech et al., 2004; Watson and Czech, 2005), Christian perspectives on hunting (Hill II and White, 2017); fan's perspectives (Kluck, 2009), Catholic perspectives (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2006, 2008, 2011; Lixey et al., 2012; Maranise, 2009, 2013a, 2013b), evangelical sports ministry and women (Blazer, 2015), the historical nature of the sport and Christianity relationship (Baker, 2000, 2007;

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[7] This, amongst others in this section is an important theme in the literature on sport and Christianity. Given the focus of this chapter is contextualizing sports chaplaincy literature in the wider discipline, the decision was made to prioritize the analysis of texts and themes that deal directly with sports chaplaincy, as opposed to a thorough analysis of the wider sport and Christianity subfield. For a rigorous examination of this, see Watson and Parker (2014).

Bradstock, 2019; Deming, 2017; Hamilton, 2016; Hoffman, 2013; Keddie, 2007; Ladd and

Mathisen, 1999; McLeod, 2013; McLeod, Justivik, and Hess, 2020; Pollock, 2006; Putney, 2001;

Watson and Parker, 2013; Whitmore, 2013)[8], and the relationship between sport and Christianity

in contemporary society (Feezell, 2013; Hoven, Watson and Parker, 2019; Mount-Shoop, 2014;

Parker and Watson, 2015; Watson and Parker, 2013) —among others. The diversity of the

subjects listed demonstrates the variety of ways in which sport and Christianity interact within

the modern world. This body of literature covers the relationship between sport and Christianity

from a theoretical and empirical perspective. Though interdisciplinary in nature, geographic and

gender (both in relation to authors and subjects/respondents) diversity is lacking. The only

collection showcasing non-western perspectives is Adogame, Watson and Parker (2017) with

chapters focusing on sport and Christianity in Argentina, Nigeria, and Ghana, amongst others. Of

particular note is the focus on Christianity and sport's relationship in Africa. Four chapters

address how sport and Christianity interact in African nations, acknowledging how sport and

Christianity's relationship in Africa does not play out in a vacuum, rather it constantly interacts

with other religious and indigenous traditions. For example, Amenga-Etego (2017) assesses the

support of the national team in Ghana by demonstrating how Christian groups, primarily from

the charismatic tradition, and indigenous religions prioritize support of the men's national team

during international tournaments but do not provide this same support for the women's team.

Amenga-Etego shows how the combination of these two faith traditions do not conflict when

supporting the men's national team, rather the support across religious traditions shows unity in

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[8] Historical writings can be placed into three categories: (i) analysis of specific events, such as Deming's (2017) examination of the religious response to the Ibrox Stadium disasters of 1902 and 1971; (ii) wider historical narratives like Baker (2007), who traces the historical nature of sport and religion from the Greeks but focuses on Christianity and sport's relationship since the 1800s, and (iii) biographical accounts of sporting figures, such as Olympic gold medalist and Christian missionary Eric Liddell (Keddie, 2007; Hamilton, 2016) or Bishop David Sheppard (Bradstock, 2019).

the nation. Unfortunately, this support is not show in the same manner to the women's team, raising questions regarding gender norms and patriarchy amongst those who support the national team. Her chapter is of particular importance, as it recognizes the disparity in how Christian communities approach female sports and is authored by a female. The issue of gender in the sport and Christianity interface warrants further attention with the only monograph being Blazer's (2015) text on US young women's interaction with evangelical Christianity. Academic work on sport and Christianity continues to grow, and the expanding nature of the field reveals the breadth and depth of the subject. There are also a number of texts that are devotional in nature, focusing on the individual's engagement with sport as a way to better understand and grow in the Christian faith.

Devotional texts connecting sport and Christianity are primarily produced by evangelical Christians and are US-centric. Some works focus on those participating in sport, be it athletes and coaches, and how they can see sport as an avenue to interact with God or incorporate their faith into their athletic endeavors (Lipe, 2013, 2015, 2020; Null, 2004; Prince, 2016; Smith, 2018; White and White, 2006). For example, Lipe (2015) offers a book of prayers for different scenarios in the athlete or coaches athletic life, such as a period of injury or before playing a difficult opponent. White and White (2006) provide various Bible studies that wed Biblical and Christian principles with sport, challenging the reader to see sport as an avenue for connection with the divine. Null (2004) argues that a Christian worldview brings wholeness and joy to the athlete. Null sees a non-Christian ethos as a detriment, suggesting that one would never be fully satisfied in sport without this perspective. His text seeks to demonstrate not only the reason for this but provide practical steps a person can take to engage with their faith; however, these

practical steps are, at times, not sports specific. In this, Null's text provides an argument for the

Christian life using the example of sport. Finally, Prince's (2016) contribution is unique as it

argues that sport can be used as an avenue for discipleship within the Christian faith.

Discipleship and how it manifests in the ministry and life of study respondents will be addressed

in chapter nine. Other devotionals use specific sports or teams as grounds for religious reflection

(Crane, 2014; Duduit, 2019; McMinn, 2015). Works such as this seek to explicitly engage the

individual's Christian faith with the playing or viewing of sport. These texts assume the divine's

endorsement of sport and the ability of the individual to engage with God through this medium,

be it as an athlete, coach or spectator. In doing so, these texts rarely, if ever, challenge the culture

and status quo of sport, providing current examples of Deford's (1976a) argument regarding

evangelical Christianity's assimilation to sport.

Devotional texts can also chronicle the faith of athletes or coaches, their paths to success and

how their faith has played a role in this process (Dungy, 2008, 2011; Foles, 2018; Gibbs, 2009;

Keenum and Perloff, 2018; Maaddi, 2018; Tebow and Whitaker, 2011; Warner, 2009). These

accounts posit the Christian faith as central to the success of those concerned and the adversities

that they have overcome.[9] While a belief in Christianity is not the only thing that their success is

attributed to, it is seen as a crucial component within their journey to the elite level of sport.

Given that these texts often emphasize the perseverance and successes of athletes, the lines

between 'faithful follower' and 'God ordained athletic successes' can, at times, be blurred. While

many of these athletes are quick to point out that God does not grant them victory, the manner in

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[9] The only text outside the genre of autobiography is Maaddi (2018) which chronicles the Philadelphia Eagles on
their journey to winning the 2018 Super Bowl. Specifically, it focuses on the Christian faith of numerous players
and the shared bond of faith which, the author suggests, helped the team win the NFL championship.

which they discuss their faith suggests otherwise. Overall, devotional texts are predicated on the assumption that engaging with God is not only possible in sport, but can enhance the experience of playing sport and being a follower of Jesus at the same time. Whereas devotional texts engage the individual in their personal faith, practitioner accounts focus primarily on sports ministry.

There are a number of practitioner publications which address the organization and delivery of Christian sports ministry. McCown and Gin (2003) recognize that sports ministry covers a wide range of ministry initiatives, dealing with a spectrum of people in sport, from spectators to elite athletes, who have varying degrees of familiarity with the Christian narrative. As a consequence, sports ministry programs can range from church programs set up to minister to practicing Christians to evangelism of non-Christians. While in the US sports chaplaincy is commonly subsumed under the heading of sports ministry, texts on sports ministry focuses primarily on initiatives run by churches or para-church organizations (Connor, 2003; Garner, 2003; Linville, 2011; McCown and Gin, 2003; Mason, 2003, 2011; Null, 2004; White and White, 2006). These authors primarily see sport as a way for the church to engage with their local communities and have an evangelistic focus, encouraging them to use sport as a means to engage with Christians and non-Christians alike. Garner's (2003) edited volume focuses on the need for sports ministry in a time of declining church attendance and engagement with other faith traditions, specifically in the US. Garner provides a macro-level understanding of the subject, with chapters focusing on the scriptural and historical understanding between sport and ministry. According to Mason (2003, 2011), incorporating sport into a ministry's programming can also engage groups, specifically men and youth, who are not typically associated with congregational churches. Contributing a chapter in Mason's (2011) volume, Linville (2011) contends that the goal of

sports ministry is outreach, and that US mega-churches should embrace this type of ministry

because they can produce state of the art facilities, like fitness centers, that can draw in

parishioners and members of the wider community. Linville sees sports ministry as a form of

evangelism, reaching out to those previously not involved in the church, and community

outreach, providing activities and spaces to the wider society. It is also important to acknowledge

the approach of Connor (2003), who concentrates on specific actions a congregation can take to

equip sports ministers and begin a sports ministry program. Connor (2003) emphasizes the

importance of training sports ministers, arguing that the better training one receives, the more

effective ministry will be. This focus on pastoral training is not consistent in the practitioner

literature, but will become vital when we assess the work of sports chaplains within the study in

chapter eight. Overall, practitioner account focusing on sports ministry texts tend to be practical

in nature, providing specific steps and suggestions for parishes or Christian groups to begin and

maintain this type of outreach.

These volumes show the depth of the literature on sport and Christianity, ranging from critical

studies on the Christian response to doping and enhancement, to the use of sport as a way to

grow and enrich personal Christian faith; however, they do not address sports chaplaincy in-

depth. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to literature in the sport and religion

interface that, to some extent, addresses this subject.

2.3 Sports chaplaincy in the wider sport and religion literature

Sports chaplaincy is briefly featured in a number of texts that focus on the larger relationship

between sport and religion, primarily regarding how sports chaplaincy developed within the

larger historical narrative surrounding sport and religion, or in texts that critique and question the role of the sports chaplain within evangelical Christianity's approach to sport. In literature produced in the United States, sports chaplaincy is often seen as a subset of the broader sports ministry landscape. Specifically, it is associated with the rise of groups like Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Athletes in Action (AIA). At this time, it is necessary to detail how the history of sports chaplaincy in the US has been presented within the literature.

The roots of sports chaplaincy in elite sports settings are addressed in texts on the historical interaction between sport and religion. Baker's (2007) monograph addresses sport and religion going back to ancient Greece, although primarily focuses on their relationship in western society since the 1800s. Baker locates the growth of sports chaplaincy, historically, in evangelical Christianity's shift from being anti-sport to promoters of sports evangelism after World War II. He argues that the prominence of evangelical leaders, such as Billy Graham, and the genesis of sports ministries like FCA and AIA built the foundation for ministry focused on elite athletes. Furthermore, elite athletes were encouraged by these groups to use their position to speak about their faith to the wider public. Baker contends that in the 1970s the professional sports locker room was transformed from a place of bad language and crude jokes to one where faith was discussed and promoted. He connects this shift to the advent of sports chaplains being present in these spaces. The integration of chaplains into elite sports was made possible, according to Baker, by two factors. First, he identifies the desire of athletes and coaches to integrate a devotional or religious dimension into their team. As discussed in the introduction, athletes such as Bill Glass and coaches Vince Lombardi and Tom Landry were pivotal in creating space for religion in the elite sports. Even though specific individuals played a role in advancing the

conversation on faith in locker rooms, Christian organizations also were involved. Second, Baker highlights the growth of Baseball Chapel as one such group. Inspired by the ministry of Bill Glass and a recommitment to his Christian faith after a family disaster, Watson Spoelstra, a Detroit based journalist, created Baseball Chapel. The ministry offered chapel services to each Major League Baseball team and by 1975 all teams in the league were using the organization's services. While some were enthusiastic about this shift, others did not welcome religion as eagerly. Baker (2007: 207) writes, "Players feared proselytizing efforts from fanatical teammates, and some self-professed Christian athletes felt pressure from evangelical mates to be more outspoken in their faith." This observation recognizes not only the discomfort of the non-believing athlete who may be preached too, but also the litmus test of being an evangelical Christian athlete, specifically around how vocal an individual was about their faith. Baker's work accurately identifies the growth of chaplaincy in professional sports and the tension present in this new presence within the locker room. Ladd and Mathisen (1999) provide further analysis on the historical development of sports chaplaincy.

Focusing their text on the role of evangelical Christianity in the development American sports, Ladd and Mathisen (1999) assess the historical and contemporary manifestation of muscular Christianity in US sport. They contend that the US version of muscular Christianity developed out of the British movement, focusing on character development and the benefits of sport on the development of the individual. However, the authors contend that the American version of muscular Christianity developed in a manner that focused on conversion as opposed to embodying the Christian message. In this, proponents of this ideology prioritized the spread of the message as opposed to the individual's expression of it. After World War II, US culture

began to prioritize sport while religion began to decline simultaneously. At this time evangelical

leaders began to reengage with sport, having dissociated with it after the

fundamentalist/modernist controversy of the 1920s, using it as a vehicle to promote religious

belief.[10] Like Baker (2007), Ladd and Mathisen (1999) locate the development of sports

chaplaincy in the 1970s. However, they argue that the confluence of four factors was key to its

growth: (i) organizational structures from groups such as AIA that supported chaplains; (ii)

demographic shifts in elite sports that saw more evangelically-minded athletes competing at the

elite level; (iii) cultural shifts in the growth of elite level sport and the wider American society

that understood religion as a key component to the American way of life; and (iv) theological

shifts in evangelical Christianity that moved away from Sabbatarian views that did not allow for

Sunday competition. Ladd and Mathisen contend that the combination of these factors allowed

sports chaplains to move between the worlds of sport and religion, forming a symbiotic

relationship in which the evangelical subculture gained access to elite sport and sports

organizations gained an avenue for instilling values within their athletes and coaches. While

adopting a primarily historical perspective in terms of analysis, Ladd and Mathisen conclude

their examination of sports chaplaincy by critiquing the lack of a prophetic voice in the field,

questioning whether sports chaplains are able to transform sport as opposed to affirming the

current system. Such criticism is similar to others, and it is to this condemnation we now turn.

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[10] The fundamentalist/modernist controversy of the 1920s centers around The Scopes Monkey Trial, in which John Scopes, a science teacher, was tried and found guilty of teaching evolutionary theory in his class in 1925. The arrest and trial were planned, but the events that occurred during the trial had unexpected consequences that hindered Christian fundamentalism. Marsden (2006: 184) wrote, "It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of 'the Monkey Trial' at Dayton, Tennessee, in transforming fundamentalism." The trial, which was widely publicized, pitted fundamentalists notions of Biblical literacy against scientific analysis in a manner that also positioned other worldviews against one another, such as urban vs. rural, and educated as opposed to uneducated. In the end, the anti-evolution viewpoint taken by the fundamentalist came off as anti-intellectual, affiliated with the rural and uneducated. As a result of this, Marsden contends that the fundamentalist ideology would not be taken seriously in the United States until after World War II (for an in-depth analysis on the reemergence of American fundamentalism after Scopes see Carpenter, 1997).

Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) provide forceful critiques regarding how evangelical Christians have approached elite sport, focusing primarily on this relationship in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Hoffman (2010) addresses how Christians, specifically US evangelicals, have come to promote a worldview regarding sports that is, in his view, opposed to the Christian gospel. This argument contends that the Christianity ethos centers around a loving God, whereas sport centers around materialism and success. Hoffman's focus revolves around how evangelicals have developed a relationship that not only supports sport, but provides minimal or no criticism of it. In this relationship, sports chaplains are not only complicit, but Hoffman considers them opportunistic in leveraging their access and position within an organization. He embeds his critique of sports chaplaincy within a chapter on the use of sport to gain converts, in which he argues against the evangelical Christian practice of having high-profile people of faith use their platform in society to provide testimony or witness to their faith as a means of evangelism. He challenges the benefits of this practice, arguing that when this occurs Christianity is marketed alongside sport, hindering the message of the Gospel and making its dissemination just another product marketed through elite sport. While not as public as the athlete who publicly witness to the Christian faith, Hoffman see's the sports chaplain as an essential component of sport evangelism. Similar to Deford (1976b) and Higgs (2013), this argument questions the need for chaplains in elite sports settings, asking why athletic celebrities need special religious attention comparable to those who are hospitalized or in the military? Hoffman concludes that elite sport should not be placed in the same category as other areas of specialized chaplaincy ministry as elite athletes and coaches select their profession, and, therefore, face challenges of their own choosing. This critique suggests that specialized

chaplaincy is only for people who find themselves in circumstances they did not select, such as a hospitals or hospice care, and not sectors that include people who have decided to enter a specific profession or degree program, such as the military, education or business.

Furthermore, Hoffman (p. 236) contends that sports chaplains are put in a delicate position, writing, "Chaplains who are provided with offices in team headquarters, given team jerseys and tickets to games, solicited for help in recruiting players, and described by coaches as 'central to our mission'; waive all rights to speak truth to power". As a consequence, he argues, sports chaplains are complicit not only in celebrity evangelism but in the win at all costs ethos of elite sport, overall. This negative accusation is theoretical, and is not supported by any empirical research or data. It also assumes that a primary motivator behind the work of these chaplains is access to spaces, be it in team facilities or games, and merchandise as opposed to serving and caring for the individuals within a specific organization. Placing his discussion of sports chaplaincy within a chapter on sports evangelism, Hoffman suggests that the role of the sports chaplain is inherently evangelistic, focusing on selling faith to athletes and those who watch sports as opposed to being a prophetic witness within elite sorts.

Similar to Hoffman, Krattenmaker's (2010) uses the marketing of faith to athletes and the wider public as the basis of his critique of sports chaplains. In his monograph, Krattenmaker (2010) seeks to assess the sports and religion interface in the US. Approaching the subject as a journalist and protagonist, he focuses on elements such as motivation behind religion's interaction with sport and specific practices associated with evangelical Christians and their work in sports. Although the author states their desire is to improve the relationship between sport and religion,

the work is scathing in its analysis of evangelical's approach to sport with minimal suggestions for improvement. Adopting a somewhat polemic stance, Krattenmaker critiques the lack of diversity in elite sports chaplaincy as well as the lack of prophetic voice from chaplains on issues present in sport. He argues that the marketing language used by sports chaplains and para-church groups suggests a direct correlation between the Christian faith and success in athletics. Calling sports chaplain's "faith coaches", Krattenmaker (2010: 51, 200) distinguishes between the American model of chaplaincy that is focused on evangelism and what he calls the "European-style ministry" that prioritizes the well-being of the athlete (see also Linville, 2016). For both Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) the role of the sports chaplain helps support a system that is primarily focused on evangelism and conversion, using sport as a medium to achieve these goals. Both authors take issue with evangelical Christians' comfort in using celebrity athletes to promote the Christian narrative without challenging the systematic issues found in sport that are opposed to a Christian worldview, such as materialism or non-violence. These critiques are located within the context of US sport and culture. To date, the only non-US author to address sports chaplaincy in a wider narrative on the relationship between sport and Christianity is Ellis (2014).

In his book, *The Games People Play: Theology, religion and sport*, Ellis (2014) seeks to not merely identify the cultural expression that is modern sports but to look at it through a theological lens. Providing a historical and theological framework for the relationship between sport and Christianity, he briefly touches on sports chaplaincy in English professional football clubs. He contends that the challenge for the sports chaplain within the context of elite sports is to not simply have an individualistic (and, some might argue, myopic) approach that is focused

exclusively on pastoral care and evangelism, but to broaden their concerns to speak prophetically into the lives of all of those whom they encounter at the pastoral level. While Ellis does not goes as far as to propose specific ways to achieve this, he does call for further research to better understand how sports chaplains may function as invited 'guests' within, for example, professional football clubs, and their ability to engage with the positive and negative elements of elite sport. Ellis' questions surrounding the prophetic voice of the sports chaplain, or lack thereof, are consistent with those of Hoffmann (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) in that he acknowledges the temptation in sports chaplaincy to affirm the status quo of the sporting institution. That said, unlike Hoffman and Krattenmaker, Ellis recognizes that this issue is present in all sectors of chaplaincy and does not assume that acquiescence or complicity is the norm in sport. Rather, he calls for further (qualitative) research on the subject, suggesting that there currently is not enough data to formulate objective statements on the overall role of the sports chaplain within elite sports settings. While sports chaplaincy is not the central focus of these texts, they are beneficial in providing a historical grounding and specific critiques surrounding the practice as it is currently perceived at the academic level. Having seen how offerings on sport and religion address the role of the sports chaplain, we now turn to literature that focuses specifically on sports chaplaincy per se.

2.4 Sports chaplaincy

The literature specifically addressing sports chaplaincy can be placed into three categories: (i) journalism, (ii) practitioner accounts, and (iii) academic. In all three areas, the focus is Christian sports chaplains serving within elite sports settings. While the majority of work in this area is found in journalism and practitioner accounts, that undertaken by academics, both empirical

research and theory-based, continues to grow. These categories will be discussed in turn, beginning with texts that originate from journalistic sources. After this, common themes within the sports chaplaincy academic literature will be addressed.

2.4.1 Journalism

The majority of journalistic publications on sports chaplaincy come in the form of articles on the role of individual sports chaplains from newspapers, magazines or other media outlets. The majority of these articles have been published in the US (Babb, 2014; Bostick, 2015; Daniels, 2019; Fowler, 2016; Fowler, 2020; Hemness, 2021; Jones, 2016; Kelber, 2009; Mathewson, 2019; Moore, 2020; Perry, 2019; Pressman, 2012; Oppenheimer, 2013; Roberts, 2005; Tarantal, 2012; Towalski, 2013; Wickersham, 2015; Whitman, 2013) and the UK (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020; Cooper, 2015; Lamont, 2015; Palmer, 2013; Tremble, 2012; Riley, 2010; Rudd, 2013a, 2013b; Verkaik, 1995; Webber, 2013, 2016; Woodhall, 2014). While lacking in-depth analyses, these articles often contain a brief biography of the chaplain and a basic overview of their role, highlighting the religious and pastoral nature of their work. In the US, many of these articles are published around major sporting events, such as the Super Bowl, profiling the chaplains associated with the teams taking part (see, for example, Daniels, 2019; Fowler, 2020; Hemness, 2021; Mathewson, 2019; Perry, 2019; Pressman, 2012; Tarantal, 2012; Wickersham, 2015).

Journalism articles in the US have not only profiled individual chaplains, but have also discussed the role of Christianity in American football, both at the NFL (Oppenheimer, 2013) and collegiate (Babb, 2014) level, emphasizing the importance of religious observance for many

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athletes and coaches, and briefly discussing the role of the sports chaplain. However, they fall short of endorsing the work of the chaplain. Other such publications have not been as positive. Roberts (2005) questioned the financial connection between the Auburn University football chaplain and a prominent donor to the University's football program, suggesting that the donor may have contributed considerable resources to the chaplain in order to gain access to the football team. Similar to Hoffman (2010), Roberts does not question the motives of the chaplain but raises concerns regarding his independence with such a prominent figure contributing to his lifestyle. Negative media attention was also associated with a sports chaplain during the Baylor University football program sexual assault scandal. In 2016, allegations that Baylor's football program had covered up various accusations of sexual abuse and rape against its athletes became public. Through the investigation and criminal cases tied to these abuses it was revealed that one victim, who was drugged and raped by multiple football players, told the football team's chaplain, amongst others, of the abuse she had suffered. The chaplain did not report the abuse outside of the football program, but did provide the victim with "literature to assist her in spiritual self-worth and preservation" (Ericksen, 2017). The chaplain in question was the head of the sports ministry program at the University and left his post amidst a restructuring of their ministry program after the allegations became public. The scandal saw other members of the football program, including the head coach, athletics administration and administration at large, such as the University president, removed, resign or leave their positions (Ericksen, 2018). The majority of articles on sports chaplaincy focus on US-based chaplains, however, there have been a number of publications on UK-based chaplains.

In an article on chaplains in English professional football, Smith (2017) profiles chaplains in various divisions of the game, including women's football. The article emphasizes the pastoral nature of UK sports chaplaincy, suggesting that chaplains serve as a supportive presence to all people regardless of religious identity. The article does not emphasize the religious role of the chaplain and states that proselytization is not a focus of English football chaplains. Smith (2017) also acknowledges that the job "is not a glamorous role, and not a high-profile one". The author's emphasis on the pastoral over the religious nature of sports chaplaincy in the UK supports the work of Krattenmaker (2010) and Linville (2016), and demonstrates a cultural difference that is present throughout the sports chaplaincy specific literature and the data collected in this study. Publications on sports chaplains by journalists are not limited to print article, but also feature in books.

Sports chaplains from the NFL have featured in full-length monographs by sports journalists, but not as the central focus. Eichelberger's (2012), a sports journalist who has worked in various media outlets in the US, only published volume, entitled *Men of Sunday*: *How faith guides the players, coaches and wives of the NFL*, focuses on the faith lives of various NFL athletes, coaches and their significant others. Throughout the narrative, Eichelberger addresses the role of the sports chaplain, describing their work as positive and suggesting that their presence is beneficial within an NFL organization. However, Eichelberger also notes that the chaplain's role relies on the head coach and that the chaplain is expected to not be a distraction or question the decisions of management. The importance of the manager's influence on the work of the sports chaplain was present in the data collected for this study and will be discussed in chapter seven. These comments suggest that the chaplain could cause issues within an organization. One example of the divisive nature of the sports chaplain is addressed in Feinstein (2005).

Feinstein (2005) spent a year with the Baltimore Ravens, documenting his time with the team in his book, *Next Man Up: A year behind the lines in today's NFL*. Feinstein dedicates a chapter to the role of the chaplain, highlighting divisions caused within the team relating to Bible study. When two players wanted to start a Bible study not led by the chaplain, but rather one led by a different sports ministry group, the chaplain took issue with this request due to previous negative experiences with this organization. At one point, Feinstein notes that this became such a contentious issue that the head coach had to step in to alleviate the problem. The author suggests that this issue and another involving the chaplain which took place a few years after were related to the chaplain's personality and perceived control issues regarding who was supporting the athletes in their faith. Unsurprisingly, Feinstein states that this was an unwanted distraction for the team. To date there have been no journalistic monographs that address chaplaincy in the EPL or UK football, at large. Sports chaplaincy literature from journalism sources may lack academic rigor and depth, but they help provide consensus around issues commonly experienced by those in the role, specifically regarding the pastoral and religious dimensions of their work. These same sentiments are also seen in practitioner accounts.

2.4.2 Practitioner accounts

Written by practicing sports chaplains, these accounts serve to explain the work and role of the chaplain within sporting organizations (Boyers 2000, 2011; Fleming, 2020; Howard, 2018; Johnson, 2008; Wood, 2011) and to educate and engage sports chaplains as a form of personal and spiritual development (Heskins and Baker, 2006; Lipe, 2006, 2020). These texts provide more depth than journalistic sources as they deliver thorough analysis and explanation regarding the work of the sport chaplain from a first-person perspective.

A small number of sports chaplains have published books or chapters in texts on chaplaincy regarding their work within their host organizations (Boyers 2000, 2011; Howard, 2018; Stewart, 2021; Wood, 2011). These monographs typically provide a biographical sketch of the chaplain and a description of their work. The texts consistently emphasize the importance of being present for coaches, athletes and staff in all circumstances; highlighting the various religious duties performed, including leading prayer, scattering of ashes and the influence a chaplain can have on matchdays. Johnson's (2008) work within an NFL club was profiled in *ESPN: The Magazine* as a part of a weekly series featuring various roles in sports.[11] The articles within the series were brief and did not go into any real depth on these positions. Johnson highlights six attributes of a sports chaplain within the NFL, arguing that chaplains are inclusive yet distinctly Christian, officiate religious services, provide pastoral care, dialogue about purpose with athletes, are not paid employees and have a non-intrusive presence on gamedays.

Heskins and Baker's (2006) edited volume featured a variety of practitioner accounts from chaplains serving in English football clubs. Their contribution to the literature is significant, as it addresses the practical dimensions of sports chaplains within English professional football. While contributors discuss the practical elements of their work there is less emphasis on the experiences of individual chaplains, with chapters addressing the work of the sports chaplain on a more general level. Writing on the role of the chaplain when dealing with an injured player, Amos (2006) identifies the desire of most athletes to return to competition quickly, as they may believe that their value is determined through their on-field contributions. He contends that the chaplain can witness to the Christian truth that a person's value comes from their place as a child

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[11] While published in a journalist source, Johnson's writing of the article himself warranted mention in the practitioner accounts category.

of God not their on-field performance (see Null, 2008). Mason (2006) upholds this notion, arguing that it is the chaplain's job to affirm who a person is as opposed to what they do, counteracting the performance-based identity so prevalent in elite level sport (see Jones et al, 2020). The volume also supports the need to be open to working with people of all faiths and none (Mason, 2006; Boyers, 2006).

Providing a US perspective, Lipe's (2006, 2020) monographs seeks to develop and guide sports chaplains. Notably, he identifies three role categories within the work of the sports chaplain. First, Lipe (2006:6) identifies "Evangelist Chaplains" whose primarily goal is evangelism and conversion, using sport as their platform. The second category is that of "Pastoral Chaplains" who utilize a more relational approach to ministry to foster relationships and encourage spiritual growth. Finally, Lipe uses the term "Sport Mentor" to describe those serving sport who seek to honor Jesus Christ both inside and outside of sport and who desire to be a "transformational force" within sport (2006: p. 6). The notion of transformation appears to be tied to the holistic emphasis of this category, however, this is not fully delineated in the text. Furthermore, the shift in terminology between 'chaplain' and 'mentor' is not explained. As a result of this, it inadvertently suggests that there is a difference between these two titles, even if both are centered on the message of the Gospel. The holistic nature of the final category suggests that the first two groupings are not as focused on the whole individual or sporting community they serve, using sport in a utilitarian manner to either gain converts or promote personal piety.

Lipe (2006:7) seeks to identify the purpose of sports chaplains and mentors, writing "The Sport Chaplain and Sport Mentor serves the people of sport in the process of fully becoming the people

whom God created them to be". Lipe argues that this is done by emphasizing four different elements: (i) relationships; (ii) the demeanor one brings to the work, such as humility and a service-oriented mindset; (iii) intentional presence; and (iv) contextual methods of engaging with those at the organization. The text highlights each of these areas, providing practical suggestions and questions meant to help a sports chaplain or mentor develop their ministry skills. Lipe's (2020) most recent work is a compilation of reflections on sports chaplaincy written over his more than 20 years in the field. He argues that the "primary tasks of sports chaplaincy [is] the following: Love extravagantly and serve selflessly" (Lipe, 2020: 51). These principles are delineated throughout the monograph, as he emphasizes the importance of intentionality in serving those in sport. Lipe's (2006, 2020) texts are different from those of other practitioners because they specifically focuses on ministry development for those serving within the field, rather than simply educating the wider public on the work of the sports chaplain. Practitioner accounts provide valuable information on the work of the sports chaplain, specifically in terms of the practical skills and roles that sports chaplains fulfill within a sports organization. As a result of being first-hand accounts, they often lack qualitative research to support their assertions; however, there is a growing field of sports chaplaincy literature that is produced by academics that details research and theory on sports chaplaincy.

2.4.3 Academic

Academic texts are typically published in peer-reviewed journals or as full-length monographs. A milestone in the academic work on sports chaplaincy was the release of a special edition of the journal *Practical Theology* focused on the topic in 2016. This publication was an acknowledgement of the growth of the academic debate in the area and coincided with the Inaugural Global Congress on Sport and Christianity, held in August 2016 in York, UK. While

there are relatively few academic books primarily focused on sports chaplaincy (Parker, Watson and White, 2016), research studies and theoretical works have been published in journals and as book chapters in both the US (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Kenney, 2016; Waller, 2021; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010; Whitmore & Parker, 2020), Canada (Hoven, 2016), Australia (Stewart, 2021), and the UK (Fleming and Parker, 2020; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Hemmings and Chawner, 2019; Jones, Parker & Daniels, 2020; King, Parker & Hemmings, 2020; Oliver & Parker, 2019; Roe & Parker, 2016).

Research based in the US has focused primarily on sports chaplains in collegiate athletics (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010). The only previous research featuring NFL chaplains was completed by Ferrin (2008). Research in the UK has been focused in the top-tiers of English professional football. Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) and Roe and Parker's (2016) research took place with individuals working within the EPL, while Oliver and Parker's (2019) study featured subjects in the EPL and the Championship, the second tier of English professional football. Theoretical and theological works on sports chaplaincy have tended to come in the form of journal articles (Hoven, 2016; Jones, Parker & Daniels, 2020; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2013c; Waller, 2016; Whitmore & Parker, 2020). A handful of chapters have been published on sports chaplaincy and its relationship to Catholicism, as well as a book stemming from the Pontifical Council for the Laity's "church and sport" section seminar in 2007 (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2006, 2008; Maier, 2012). Parker, Watson and White's (2016) edited volume was the first major academic text published specifically on sports chaplaincy. This collection features chapters on current and historical trends of sports chaplaincy and how it manifests itself in various international contexts, theological and conceptual

frameworks surrounding sports chaplaincy, and the practical nature of the role. Throughout this literature a variety of common themes emerge on the role of the sports chaplain and the contextual challenges present. These include i) responsibilities associated with the role of the sports chaplain, ii) differences in sports chaplaincy in the UK and the US, iii) limited training and accreditation for sports chaplains, and iv) limited or inconsistent expectations from host organization regarding the work of sports chaplain.

2.4.4 Responsibilities of the sports chaplain

Both research-based and theoretical literature on sports chaplaincy identifies pastoral and spiritual care as the two primary responsibilities of the role (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Jones, Parker & Daniels, 2020; Kenney, 2016; King, Parker & Hemming, 2020; Linville, 2016; Maier, 2012; Maranise 2013c, 2016; Mazza, 2008; Oliver & Parker, 2019; Roe & Parker, 2016; Stewart, 2021; Waller, 2016; Waller & Cottom, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010). Kenney (2016) contends that the care of another is at the core of chaplaincy, connecting the work of the sports chaplain to others sectors of chaplaincy. This literature cites the relational nature of sports chaplaincy as a crucial component to pastoral care, specifically in relation to the chaplain's ability to be a confidential and encouraging presence. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2012) and Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) argue that opportunities to engage in this manner often come at times of bereavement or loss. Mazza (2008), Maier (2012) and Waller and Cottom (2016) contend that the pastoral nature of the sports chaplain's work makes them distinct in an elite sports setting, as they witness to God's love and acceptance in an environment where these principles are not normative. Roe and Parker (2016) further support this notion, arguing that the sports chaplain's role is distinct from

other supports within the holistic care mechanism that serve clubs because they can provide both pastoral and spiritual care.

Various publications have focused on the relationship between sports psychology and sports chaplaincy, and the roles both play within their respective clubs (Gamble, Hill and Parker, 2013; Hemmings, Watson and Parker, 2019; Hemmings and Chawner, 2019; Watson and Nesti, 2005). Hemmings et al. (2019) identifies the growing focus on mental health in sports, and the need to recognize how sports psychology address the religious and spiritual needs of athletes. Watson and Nesti (2005) suggest that sports psychologists focus on athletic performance and do not attend to the spiritual needs of the individual. Building off this, Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) argue that the ability to offer spiritual support is one component that differentiates the chaplain from the sport psychologist. In their small-scale qualitative study of four sports chaplains and three sports psychologists in the EPL, Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) demonstrated that sports psychologists focused on performance enhancement while the primary concern of the chaplains was spiritual needs. However, they show that both roles were involved in the pastoral care of athletes and both were limited within their club structure due to perceptions associated with their positions. The authors found little evidence of collaboration between the two groups, and conclude by suggesting that sports psychologists and chaplains should work cooperatively together to overcome barriers and provide holistic care. Hemmings and Chawner (2019) affirm this notion, with the latter providing a case study on how this partnership worked in English professional cricket. The other primary responsibility of the sports chaplain is the spiritual care of individuals at the club.

Spiritual care is often associated with the officiating or coordinating of religious services, such as officiating worship, praying with athletes and coaches, and leading Bible study (Dzikus, Hardin and Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Linville, 2016; Maranise 2013c, 2016; Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, 2008, 2010). While offering pastoral care that is spiritual in nature may also be placed under this category, the literature tends to focus on these activities. Providing spiritual care is more prevalent for US-based practitioners, where elements such as this are normative for sports chaplains (Ferrin 2008, Linville, 2016). A more rigorous analysis of the differences present in sports chaplaincy within these geographic contexts will be provided in the next section. Even though spiritual care is a core practice of sports chaplaincy, the literature is clear that overt proselytization is not acceptable (Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Maranise, 2013c, 2016; Roe & Parker, 2016) and that chaplains are present to serve people of all faiths and none (Ferrin, 2008; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2013c, 2016; Roe & Parker, 2016). Although chaplains may seek to serve all, the presence of a Christian minister within sporting organizations has frequently raised questions regarding religious freedom in the US. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion, creating a potential challenge to sports chaplains ministering in public organizations, particularly state-run institutions of higher education. Dzikus, Hardin and Waller (2012) highlight resistance to the appointment of a sports chaplain within the athletic department at Iowa State University in 2007. The hiring was protested by faculty, with 96 professors, roughly four to five percent of the university's emeritus or teaching faculty at the time, signing a petition that stated appointing a Christian sports chaplain to the department violated the First Amendment rights of non-Christian athletes at a public institution. Even though the position was approved, numerous provisions were put in place to make the role explicitly inter-religious and volunteer. Dzikus et al. (2012)

note that the voluntary nature of sports chaplains working in public institutions is common, and the lack of monetary contributions to sports chaplains is supposed to remove any official endorsement of a specific religion by public universities.[12] While pastoral and spiritual care is widely seen as central to the role some have challenged these components, specifically surrounding the over-emphasis of such specific responsibilities.

Ellis (2014) and White (2016) critique the narrow focus of sports chaplaincy, arguing that the role should also include speaking against "system and social issues ('race', family, economics, gender, media practices and so on)" (White, 2016, p. 114). For both authors, the systemic issues surrounding sport are not consistently addressed by sports chaplains due to the focus on providing personal care to individuals within a host organization. Ellis (2014) and White (2016) challenge sports chaplains to think of the transformative power of their role on a personal and corporate level. To confront these issues, the sports chaplain must be willing to speak prophetically, offering hope that current individual and societal issues can be different in the future (See Ballard, 2009). Nevertheless, the pastoral and spiritual care given by the sports chaplain are central to the role in its current form; however, the manner in which they are prioritized or emphasized differs depending on geographic location.

2.4.5 Differences in UK and US based sports chaplaincy

Literature on sports chaplaincy has primarily focused on chaplains serving in the UK and the US due to the prevalence of sports chaplaincy in these areas and the location of academics studying the subject. The differences in geography also provide differences in culture and how sports

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[12] For further discussion on the issue see Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2012).

chaplaincy is approached. Linville (2016) offers a critique of the US model of sports chaplaincy and, in doing so, highlights four differences between sports chaplaincy within these two geographical contexts. First, he explores the theme of 'speaking versus serving' arguing that chaplains in the US are more focused on attending to the religious needs of those in the organization, including hosting chapel services. This is juxtaposed to sports chaplains in the UK, who focus primarily on pastoral care and a "ministry of presence" (Linville, 2016, p. 33). This assertion is supported by Smith's (2017) emphasis on the pastoral nature of UK-based sports chaplaincy and Ferrin's (2008) findings on the spiritual focus of chaplains within the NFL. Second, professionalism: US chaplains tend to see sports chaplaincy as their primary profession, while UK chaplains tend to also serve in a parish or other ministry setting. Third, vision: Linville contends that US sports chaplains focus more on evangelism, while UK chaplains emphasize the relational dimension of their work. Linville (2016:33) is quick to note, "This is not to say that UK sports chaplains do not evangelize or that US sports chaplains do not serve pastorally. Rather, this particular distinction has more to do with emphasis and philosophy of evangelism". Finally, proclamation or incarnation: focusing on evangelism, this final point argues that US chaplains tend to focus on the verbal proclamation of the gospel, whereas UK based chaplains are more incarnational and relationally based in their approach to evangelism and ministry. The emphasis on sport and evangelism is seen in other literature as well, as Waller (2016) notes that training methods used by para-church organizations working primarily in the United States promote the combination of evangelism and sport.

Furthermore, Linville highlights four areas that raise concerns in US-based sports chaplaincy. First, he notes a secular multi-culturalism that is present in the wider society that can be hostile

to an explicitly Christian message. As a result of this, the chaplain's availability and access may be restricted. Furthermore, chaplains may feel pressure to conform to a sportianity mentality, as referenced by DeFord (1976), to improve their access within an organization. Linville's emphasis on the shift in culture affirms the work of Uszynksi (2016), who argues that sports chaplains must contend with the declining influence of institutional religion and an emphasis on the personal and subjective nature of spirituality when ministering to athletes. Second, the culture of elite sports limits the time allotted for interaction between the chaplain and members of an organization. Using the example of limited time for worship, Linville contends that, when time is available, it is focused on motivational speeches using Christian themes rather than authentic worship. These services are often in spaces, such as hotel conference rooms, that, according to Linville, are not conducive to worship. Third, he questions the motivation of sports chaplains and the benefits they can gain from working within this elite area of society, calling for them to question their motivations and intentions. This critique mirrors those of Hoffman (2010), who argues that sports chaplains serving elite sports benefit from their position. Building off of this, Linville's final critique scrutinizes the motivation of professional athletes and coaches, who may use religion as a type of 'lucky charm' in their preparation for athletic contests. Linville's criticism calls for the current model of sports chaplaincy to not only be challenged, but reformed. He focuses his restructuring of sports chaplaincy on empowering the local church to train local members to be effective sports chaplains and to point elite athletes to their local church as a place of worship and community. These critiques are similar to those of Ellis (2014), Hoffman (2010), Krattenmaker (2010) and White (2016) who raise concerns regarding the evangelical and proclamation-based nature of elite sports chaplaincy, particularly in US. These types of critiques have not been consistently seen in UK-based sports chaplaincy, which does not share the same

profile or expectations of the chaplain to lead religious programming, such as worship or Bible study, as US sports chaplaincy. However, in both geographic locations questions have been raised regarding the training and accreditation of chaplains.

2.4.6 Limited training and accreditation

Various author recognize the lack of formal training or accreditation required for sports chaplains and the potential shortcomings this has on the professionalization of the field (Boyers, 2016; Linville, 2016; Waller, 2016; Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, 2008, 2010; Waller, Dzikus, Hardin and Bemiller, 2016). Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2010) acknowledge that sports chaplaincy is growing as a vocation; however, their research also demonstrates that sports chaplains rarely seek professional chaplaincy certification or training. Furthermore, they contend that inconsistent training and a lack of general definition of the role may leave the sports chaplain unprepared for their ministry. In turn, Waller, Dzikus and Hardin argue that the ad hoc nature of sports chaplaincy leads to issues surrounding accountability and does not provide a set standard of practice throughout the field. The authors suggest that a governing body would aid the field, allowing for consistent training and standards of practice that would lead to formal accreditation for sports chaplains.

Waller, Dzikus, Hardin and Bemiller (2016) expand on the notion of credentialing by highlighting elements beneficial to the accountability of the chaplain, including improved standards in training and professional development. They recognize that determining standards of training or practice and the lack of consensus surrounding sports chaplaincy as a legitimate subfield of chaplaincy have made certifying sports chaplains difficult. Waller (2016) contends

that a lack of formal training and accreditation makes it difficult for sports chaplaincy to have its own independent professional identity. He argues that the sports chaplain's primary identity should be that of chaplain, and to do so will required further training including identity formation. The accountability, evaluation and training structures around the sports chaplains within the study will be assessed in chapter eight. However, how much current training sports chaplains receive is contested within the literature.

In his chapter in Parker, Watson and White's (2016) edited volume, Maranise (2016) cites Johnson's (2008) six attributes of the sports chaplain, expanding on each point. While Maranise writes from a Roman Catholic perspective, his chapter adopts an ecumenical view as he seeks to speak to chaplains from different nations and Christian traditions. One attribute Maranise (2016: 137) identifies is the religious responsibilities of the chaplain, which he calls "clerical duties", and goes on to add that the chaplain must perform these duties with the "academic training" they have received. Maranise states that a sports chaplain's educational training "will naturally include their chaplaincy training" as well as theological studies (p. 138). While Maranise is confident chaplains currently receive this type of training, his assertion goes against other literature in the field. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin's (2008, 2010) research demonstrates that collegiate sports chaplains do not consistently complete chaplaincy or sports chaplaincy specific training within their larger theological education. The authors argue that this lack of specific instruction, particularly in relation to the practical experience of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), causes sports chaplains to be isolated from other forms of chaplaincy.[13] Waller, Dzikus

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[13] Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a program that combines professional education with practical experience in multi-faith chaplaincy settings. Predominately a North American training tool, numerous US-based Christian denominations require a candidate to complete CPE before ordination and completing units of CPE is required to be a Board Certified Chaplain by the Association of Professional Chaplains.

and Hardin (2008, 2010) and Waller Dzikus, Hardin and Bemiller (2016) suggest that an accrediting body would be able to provide minimum standards in regard to required training for sports chaplains.

The literature also suggests that sports chaplains are not adequately trained in safeguarding policy and procedures. Oliver and Parker (2019) focus on safeguarding and the role of the sports chaplain in the holistic support network of youth academy footballers in the UK. The term safeguarding refers to the safety and protection of the people who chaplains interact with, particularly vulnerable groups, as well as their own safety in terms of protection from unsubstantiated allegations or association with ethical issues. While the authors argue that the sports chaplain is well positioned to provide holistic support, their research demonstrates that some English professional football clubs do not have clear safeguarding provisions for the chaplain, leaving them in a vulnerable position. If chaplains are to be held accountable for their work they will also need avenues to report ethical issues that may arise within their organization. Oliver and Parker's (2019) work does not address safeguarding training or standards for sports chaplains, and this topic warrants further research.

Safeguarding is not addressed in any US based literature on sports chaplaincy. One reason for this is the difference in terminology between the US and the UK. In the latter this kind of terminology is normative, but it is not necessarily used in the US where terms such as 'mandatory reporting' or 'boundary training' may be used to discuss the protection of vulnerable individuals or those working with these groups. Nevertheless, none of these terms or concepts are discussed in the US based sports chaplaincy literature. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008)

come the closest by addressing the legal, ethical and social issues found in American collegiate sports chaplaincy. In this analysis minimal emphasis is placed on safeguarding with the only mention being how a trained chaplain may have been able to help spot warning signs around the suicide of a student athlete and identifying the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education's call for appropriate boundaries in their Code of Ethics. More research and training is needed on safeguarding measures for sports chaplains in the US.

While Waller, Dzikus, Hardin and Bemiller (2016) and Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2010) do not specifically mention safeguarding training in their call for a credentialing agency, an organization of this nature would be influential in normalizing safeguarding measures. Even though there are publications addressing the need for sports chaplains to receive training, minimal research or literature has been produced outside of the University of Tennessee, where Waller is a faculty member. More literature and research is needed to address the training, or lack thereof, of the sports chaplain. The lack of specific training identified in the literature is paired with inconsistent expectations for sports chaplains set by host organizations.

2.4.7 Limited or inconsistent expectations from the host organization

Various publications recognize that formal or defined roles for sports chaplains are rarely provided by host organizations (Gamble, Hill & Parker 2013; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2012). As a consequence, chaplains may struggle to be fully integrated into their clubs, which may, in turn, hinder their ability to effectively minister to those present within their specific context (Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Roe & Parker, 2016). Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) found that chaplains who were not formally integrated within their club only worked with

players upon request and did not proactively promote their services. Furthermore, the ability of a chaplain to work within a club is often influenced by the team manager or other organizational 'gatekeepers'. As has been mentioned, research studies have consistently demonstrated that the role of the chaplain and their access within an organization was dependent on the head coach or executive management (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010). Given the frequency of coaching changes within elite sport, this may be an issue for the chaplain as their access and expectations may change depending on the current senior coach's desire to incorporate a sports chaplain into the team. A lack of clear organizational expectations and the potential for a chaplain's role to shift depending on the current coach's desires creates challenges for sports chaplains and hinders their ability to provide pastoral and spiritual care for those in their organization. These four areas will be addressed throughout the data chapters, helping inform the analysis around the work and mission of the participants in this study.

2.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to map key literature across the sport and religion interface, especially that concerning sports chaplaincy. It has demonstrated that many see connections between religious observance and modern-day sport, almost exclusively in the western world; however, many also see problems in the relationship between the two. The field can be delineated by these juxtaposing viewpoints, with little middle ground between those who see the relationship between sport and religion as positive or negative. The criticism of sport and religion's relationship focuses primarily on how evangelical Christians in the US have approached sport, both in terms of using it as a vehicle for evangelism and the lack of critique

regarding elite sporting culture. Within the wider sport and religion field, the majority of literature focuses on sport's relationship with Christianity. A wide range of works have been completed on this subject that are academic and devotional in nature. While some works on sport and Christianity address challenging topics such as doping or sexuality and gender, more critical analysis regarding sport's interaction with Christianity is needed. For example, there is currently no full-length text that analyses and addresses a Christian response to race, ethnicity, racism and white privilege in sport. Furthermore, research and engagement with sport and Christianity in non-western settings must be promoted. Encouraging non-western academics and writers to analyze the sport and Christianity interface within their culture will provide a breadth and depth to the subject not currently present. Literature on this subject matter is relevant and necessary as these topics continue to be at the forefront of international sport.

The chapter primarily focused on literature pertaining to sports chaplaincy, identifying this as a subfield in the larger sport and religion genre. The chapter demonstrates that sports chaplaincy is addressed in works on sport and religion, as well as sport chaplaincy specific literature. Larger works that briefly address sports chaplaincy were analyzed, finding that these studies tended to focus on the historical background of sports chaplaincy or critiqued the current model of sports chaplaincy in the US, which is heavily influenced by evangelical Christianity. Sports chaplaincy specific literature is made up of writings from journalists, practitioners and academics that are oftentimes descriptive. Academic literature featured both research studies and theoretical texts, focusing on four common themes: responsibilities associated with the role of the sports chaplain, differences in sports chaplaincy between the UK and the US, limited training and accreditation for sports chaplains, and minimal or inconsistent expectations from the organization regarding

the work of the sports chaplain. Interestingly, whereas the wider sport and religion literature sees evangelism as a central focus of sports chaplaincy, literature specifically on sports chaplaincy consistently critiques overt proselytization. While these two things are not one in the same, the consistent criticism of proselytization would suggest that overt forms of evangelism are not welcome in elite sport. Academic writing on sports chaplaincy continues to grow, but more literature and research is needed. Future research topics are numerous, but a few areas of examination include how specific competitions and leagues view the role of the sports chaplain at a corporate level and how this compares to other sectors of society where chaplains serve, such as the military or healthcare; training and safeguarding requirements for sports chaplains; and the role and theological underpinning of the chaplain in sports that have mortal danger, such as automobile racing. These are only a few examples, and the possibilities continue to be numerous as people work to understand the field and provide support to current practitioners. The sport and religion interface and the subfield of sports chaplaincy continues to grow and increased literature on the topic will help all better understand the relationship between sport and religion, and the work of the sports chaplain.

Analysis of the wider literature on sports and religion helped us situate the role of the sports chaplain in the world of elite sport, assessing their work and the current research on the field. In this same manner, it is now necessary to look at literature in the field of missiology to better understand the church's mission and how the sports chaplain fits into this task. In doing so, the following chapter will show how the sports chaplain is an important witness to the Christian worldview in a secular context.

Chapter Three:

Theological Roots of Sports Chaplaincy

3.0 Introduction

As we have seen, existing literature on sports chaplaincy focuses primarily on practitioner accounts of various sports chaplains within elite sports settings. While beneficial, these writings offer little, if any, theological grounding for sports chaplaincy. This lack of theological reflection leaves a theoretical gap within the field. The aim of this chapter is to fill this void and develop a theological understanding of sports chaplaincy. Initially, mission is defined and located within the doctrine of the Trinity. The chapter then moves to an exploration of the incarnational nature of chaplaincy. Grounding its arguments in the texts of established missiological scholars, the chapter suggests that the concept of *missio Dei* is one way to understand the mission and role of the chaplain in a post-Christendom society, and more specifically in western industrial society (i.e. the UK and the US). The chapter concludes by identifying the sports chaplain as one who is ideally placed to fulfill this role within the world of sport.

3.1 Locating mission within the doctrine of the Trinity

González (2005) notes that historically the field of missiology centered around the practical elements of missionary work.[14] Guder (2015) identifies Barth's 1932 lecture at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference as a turning point regarding mission and its relation to theology. In this lecture, Barth argued that theology and mission accompany one another, serving as a corrective

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[14] It is important to distinguish between mission and missions. Newbigin (1989: 121) states that while mission can be involved in missions they are different, defining mission as "the entire task for which the Church is sent into the world". Therefore, when one speaks of the mission of the church it is not necessarily speaking about proclaiming the Gospel where it has not been heard, which is the task of missions, but rather speaking to the church's commission in the world.

by asking questions of motive and function of the other. Barth notes that mission is inherently based on the proclamation, both to those outside and inside the church, of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He argues that theology cannot provide the reason behind missionary action, which only comes from God. Barth's paper not only emphasizes the divine as the genesis of mission and the connection between theology and mission, but also declares that the local church is involved in mission. Discussing the missionary appeals of the time, Barth critiques the use of missionary reports to transmit the work of those within missions field. He argues that the local congregation itself was "a missionary community" (Barth, 1932, p. 10). Barth provides the foundation for the contextual nature of mission, becoming "one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God himself" (Bosch, 1991, p. 389). In this accompaniment and correction, we can begin to speak of a missional theology. Subsequent developments in missional theology and the ecumenical movement helped promote this understanding, shifting the position of mission in theology from "a subdivision of practical theology, a consensus going back to Schleiermacher, [to its current position] within the larger understanding of the Trinity" (Guder, 2015, p. 21).

Flett (2010) contends that common missiological language does not adequately describe the Trinitarian nature of mission. Flett notes that understandings of mission typically emphasize either God's being and movement in history or God's action and the life of the church. In this, one is forced to prioritize God's being or action. Flett states that these two elements of the divine cannot be separated, arguing that union is found in God between the Father and Son through the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. This unity within the Trinity coincides with the dynamic nature of the divine. Flett (2010: 211) proclaims, "As the living God, God is a missionary God: in God's self-determination, the apostolic mission belongs to the eternal life of God". Even

though mission is a characteristic of God, its position in theological discourse does not suggest it is a priority. The absence of mission, according to Flett (2010: 296), from the core of theological and dogmatic discourse "has deleterious consequences for the doctrine of God". In identifying mission as a subdivision of the practical theology field, the Christian community does not fully live into its call to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. In locating mission within the doctrine of the Trinity, mission cannot be ignored, overlooked or considered an activity of a few; but is a necessary element of all actions of the Christian community and the theological worldview it espouses. For Flett (2010: 32), a Trinitarian understanding of mission requires "a corresponding human action" seen through the witness of the Christian community and individual. One way in which this witness is affirmed is through chaplaincy.

3.2 The theology of chaplaincy

Embedded within communities outside the traditional bounds of the church, chaplains serve contexts where a spiritual presence is atypical. Todd et al. (2014: 4) note:

> Chaplaincy is situated in the interaction of faith, and faith communities, with other areas of the life of society. Characterised, on the one hand, by being a pastoral presence in diverse settings, chaplaincy is also a significant aspect of the church's contribution to civil society. Chaplaincy is therefore a distinctive ministry undertaken in the public square by representative and authorised ministers (lay & ordained), embedded characteristically in social rather than church structures and focussing [sic] the vocation of the church to serve the mission of God in the world.

This definition recognizes chaplaincy's intentional focus on those outside the walls of the church, supporting people who may not identify as members of the Christian community. In the

UK, at least, chaplaincy is a growing ministry, and remains in need of rigorous theological grounding. Recent scholarship has sought to address this void.

In their report on the Church of England's (COE) involvement and support of chaplaincy, Todd et al (2014: 7) state that chaplains described their work missionally using the term 'incarnation', which was expressed most often as "a ministry of presence, action and public theology, which supported people in being more fully human, but which also drew back the 'veil' to reveal the presence of God". This identification of the incarnational work of the chaplain is further supported by Dunlop (2017: 178-179), who emphasizes the language of "being there" as central to the chaplain's understanding of mission and being an incarnational presence.[15] Reflecting on the various ways that chaplains described their work missionally, Dunlop identifies three areas that support the incarnational understanding of chaplaincy. First, the incarnation is a physical presence, reiterating the importance of 'being there' for people. Second, she argues for chaplaincy to be truly incarnational it must be redemptive. Dunlop (2017: 183) writes, "The goal of the incarnation (alongside the death and resurrection of Jesus) is to bring about a redemptive work that transforms people more and more into the likeness of God". Finally, she suggests that the incarnation reveals what it means to be truly human, emphasizing that the chaplain reaffirms that all are created in God's image. The notion of a "ministry of presence" identified within the COE report and Dunlop aligns with Holm (2009), who articulates the importance of this concept within chaplaincy. Holm (2009) contends that intentionally practicing a ministry of presence allows for God's presence to be experienced by both individuals, even if they might not describe it as such, and this can lead to a transformational encounter for all involved. Todd (2018) further affirms the incarnational nature of chaplaincy, however, he advances the argument by suggesting

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[15] Dunlop's (2017) findings are derived from the research completed by Todd et al (2014).

that the incarnation is embodied by the chaplain through dialogue and pastoral care. For Todd, dialogue is categorized by building relationships, listening and responding in an appropriate manner. He continues by suggesting that pastoral care and concern for the wellbeing of the human involved corresponds with Christian redemption. Through dialogue and pastoral care, the chaplain has the opportunity to embody the incarnational theology that aligns with their ministry.

From this brief outline we can see chaplaincy is a pastoral role in a non-church setting, in which the chaplain engages and interacts primarily with people not associated with a particular community of faith. In serving the mission of God chaplaincy is incarnational, emphasizing being present, ready to help bring redemption, and affirms the humanity found in each person and/or situation. This theological worldview manifests itself through dialogue and pastoral care. While this provides an understanding of chaplaincy, a more rigorous discussion regarding mission is required to understand how chaplaincy, and specifically sports chaplaincy, is missional. To do so, we turn to the work of renowned missiologist, David Bosch.

3.3 The *missio Dei*

In his seminal work, Bosch (1991), a South African professor of missiology, highlights the church's role in mission historically and contemporarily. The framework he uses is based off the work of Thomas Kuhn, a US philosopher of science, and Hans Küng, a Swiss Catholic priest and theologian. Focusing on the historical development of science, Kuhn (1962/2012) contends that the field does not grow at a steady rate, but rather in revolutions. In these revolutions, shifts in how people view and approach scientific theory and practice lead to a noticeably different approach to the field at large. This change is termed a 'paradigm shift' by Kuhn and causes individuals to view the world in a different manner than before. Kuhn's original framing has

been used in other areas academia, and the wider culture, to assess change. Using Kuhn's theory, Küng (1989) separated the church's history into six theological paradigms, periods spanning decades or centuries. Each paradigm is distinct from its predecessor, with its own trends and emphases regarding how Christians live out and transmit their faith. The transition between paradigms may take decades to occur, requiring "reform, not replacement" with relation to the church's work (Bosch, 1991, p. 367). Using the theoretical framework of Kuhn and Küng's application of said theory to the church, Bosch (1991) analyzes the mission of the church in each of the six historical paradigms defined by Küng. The work is Bosch's magnum opus and is a foundational text in the field of missiology, both in terms of its historical analysis of mission and the concepts transmitted in the work. In particular, Bosch's writing on the *missio Dei*, translated from Latin as 'mission of God' or 'God's mission', is crucial in the missiological literature and for this study. Before we can discuss the *missio Dei* it is necessary to analyze the current location of the church in regards to paradigms.

Bosch affirms that the church is between two paradigms, the modern Enlightenment paradigm and the emerging ecumenical paradigm. To better understand the latter, it is necessary to comprehend the former. To begin, he identifies various factors that define the Enlightenment paradigm, centering on the intellectual developments of reason, cause and effect, the impartiality of fact, and the ability of humans to be autonomous agents (See, for example, Descartes, 1641/1993; Hume 1739/2000; Kant, 1781/2008; Locke 1689/1988, 1689/1996; Smith, 1776/2003).[16] This was a shift in thinking from the previous paradigm that emphasized a top-down society in which the church and nobility held power and influence over the wider

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[16] A full analysis of the Enlightment and its impact are not possible here. For a historical and philosophical overview of the Enlightenment, see Dupré, 2005; Hazard, 2013; Sorkin, 2011.

population. One byproduct of this period was the belief that western society was, in some way, superior due to the technological and philosophical advances of the age. After a rigorous analysis of the Enlightenment paradigm, Bosch provides a critique of its major characteristics, demonstrating how it failed to live up to its own goals and ideals. These critiques focus on the failing of systems to produce equal human flourishing. These shortcomings have caused society to shift, and has resulted in the emergence of a new paradigm.

The recognition of a new paradigm does not result in a full analysis of that period because it is still unfolding.[17] Bosch acknowledges the challenges in describing the current paradigm, but provides a variety of factors that are notable in the shift between the two periods. Bosch states that, in the west, from the end of World War II until the publication of the text in the 1990s a rise in secularity and religious pluralism, an awareness of cultural superiority that was propagated in western colonialism and missions, and a decrease in the role of the western church affected the church and its role in society. Furthermore, these factors created a space in which the church's role in western society declined. As a result, the church moved to the periphery of contemporary society. This period is often referred to as post-Christendom. According to Bosch, this loss of privilege placed the church in relatively unfamiliar territory, and it is within this context that his understanding of mission takes shape.

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[17] The analysis of these two paradigms presents a challenge for the contemporary reader. Bosch is contrasting a historical period, the Enlightenment, and the contemporary reality he is writing within. However, this text was written three decades ago. It is not an exaggeration to say that the context Bosch writes in is noticeably different than that of the 2020s. As a result of this, further discussion and analysis on the present paradigm the church finds itself in is needed.

At the heart of Bosch's understanding of God and the emerging paradigm is the concept of the *missio Dei*. Theological discourse around *missio Dei* and God as the genesis of mission is primarily linked to the International Missionary Council of 1952 in Willingen, Germany; however, Bosch (1991) identifies Karl Barth's paper at the Brandenburg conference as one of the foundational works in this dialogue. While Barth's paper provided a grounding for mission to be seen as an action of God that was manifest through the local church, he did not use the term *missio Dei* or a Trinitarian argument. Flett (2010) demonstrates that Barth's lecture, while foundational, was not as influential in the leadup to the Willingen conference as previously suggested.[18] Nevertheless, the Willingen conference is seen as the catalyst for *missio Dei* rhetoric.

The Willingen conference came at a time in which a series of events converged, necessitating a shift in missional thinking. Günther (2003) specifically references the expulsion of missionaries from China in 1948/1949 and the end of colonialism, while Matthey (2003) highlights the decline in thinking surrounding the civilizing presence and superiority of western nations and the effects of two world wars leading to the conference. It was in a preconference report prepared by American delegates that the Trinity was linked to the act of mission. The focus on Trinitarian theology deemphasized a Christo-centric approach and created an avenue for the church to be sent into the wider community. While different missional frameworks were debated, Günther (2003) notes that all were grounded in mission coming from God. The final conference report is explicitly Trinitarian, calling the Christian community to consider its actions in the world as a

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[18] Flett (2010) identifies a 1934 essay by theologian Karl Hartenstein as the first use of the term *missio Dei*. Flett notes that Hartenstein neither intended nor succeeded in creating a Trinitarian grounding for *missio Dei* and mission. Flett (2010: 123-162) provides a detailed timeline of the Willingen conference, critiquing many common conceptions about the events and ideologies surrounding the conference.

part of the mission of the triune God. Interestingly, the *missio Dei* narrative rehearsed at the conference is not evident. Numerous sources (see, for example, Bosch, 1991; Flett, 2010; Guder, 2015; Günther, 2003; Matthey, 2003; Ross et al., 2016; Sundermeier, 2003) point out that the term *missio Dei* was not used at the conference or in its publications, but that this understanding of mission was developed during the course of the gathering. Nevertheless, the term *missio Dei*, its Trinitarian implications and the work of the Willingen conference are closely connected.

In sum, the conference shifted the focus, understanding and practice of mission, challenging the entire church to engage with it in a new way. This stimulated a subsequent rethinking and restructuring of how the local church came to comprehend its role in society. Developing his understanding of *missio Dei* from this viewpoint, Bosch (1991) describes the church's role in mission. Central to his understanding of mission is the church as a body that is sent. This process of sending requires the entire church to go out into society. In turn, mission becomes one of the key characteristics of the church body and of the individual Christian. Bosch (1991) further emphasizes that the growth of the church is not the end goal of mission and that the church should remove itself as the primary recipient or benefactor of mission. This replaces cultural appropriation or numerical growth as central aims of missiological action. Instead, emphasis is placed on the witness of God's love and salvific work throughout the world. With God's work and witness as the focus, Bosch goes on to articulate his thinking around the *missio Dei.*

In the first instance, Bosch (1991: 390) argues that mission is "derived from the very nature of God". When people identify with the *missio Dei* they are identifying and communing with God, making the two inseparable. For Bosch, the love of God is *missio Dei*, providing an avenue for

humans to experience the divine. Bosch (1991: 390) argues that mission is an element of God's nature, and "to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people". He goes on to suggest that the *missio Dei* takes place throughout ordinary life and is not only mediated through the church but is relational in its connection with the divine and with one another. Therefore, the *missio Dei* is inherently relational, and these connections are a key avenue for experiencing the love and mission of God. The relational nature of the *missio Dei* will be crucial to our conversation around the relationships between chaplains and members of their host organizations discussed in chapter eight. Bosch further contends that seeing the source of mission as God's love has implications for how Christian notions of salvation and justice are understood. Embodying the *missio Dei* allows the Christian to witness to their belief in God's continued activity in the world. Guder (2015: 43) affirms the Christian community's role in witnessing to God's work, writing, "common witness is the practices that demonstrate before the watching world that God loves it and invites all into friendship and the service of his healing purposes." Witnessing to the *missio Dei* through intentionally being present and acting in the world allows for God's love and presence to be made known. Where previous understanding of mission and missions saw conquest and power as central, the *missio Dei* seeks to infuse the love of God into a specific context without forcefully imposing itself. In this, the *missio Dei* is different than evangelism. Bosch (1991: 420) defines evangelism as the "dimension and activity of the church's mission which, by word and deed and in the light of particular conditions and a particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives". Bosch sees mission as larger than evangelism and the two are not equals; however, he does acknowledge that the terms are linked

both in theory and praxis. The topic of evangelism and how chaplains approached the subject will also be addressed in chapter eight.

The concept of *missio Dei* is not without its critics. Guder (2015) recognizes that many have taken issue with language surrounding *missio Dei* due to its explicit conviction that Jesus is Lord. He notes that this is especially challenging within the context of religious pluralism, as this narrative requires one to affirm God's specific action in Israel and Jesus that has universal consequences. Kirk (1999) and Engelsviken (2003) identify how the term has become a catch-all for the entire action of God or the church. Engelsviken (2003) contends that the term must be limited at times so that everything does not become mission. Richebacher (2003), Günther (2003) and Flett (2010) all critique the ambiguity of the term, although Flett (2010) notes that this has helped it remain relevant. He writes, "*missio Dei*'s success results from its capacity to unify discordant positions. Elasticity is a hallmark of the concept, present at its genesis, and a function it continues to fulfill" (Flett, 2010: p.157). Flett (2010: 162) challenges the Trinitarian nature of the notion itself, arguing:

> The key Trinitarian flaw rests in this breach between who God is in himself and who he is in his economy. Where a Trinitarian grounding of mission should overcome this breach, *missio Dei* trades on it: a perceived gap between God and the world supplies the necessary space for reconstructing the missionary act. In that mission is attempting to achieve what only God can, the result is a distended 'missionary' eschatology or ecclesiology.

Flett questions whether or not mission comes from who God is in God's being, making the missional justification an eschatological event, or if mission is an action of God, defining the

missional call as an ecclesial task. For Flett, this tension does not naturally resolve itself through an emphasis on the Trinity; rather, one must trust God's witness and action through the Trinity to affirm mission as Trinitarian. Kirk (1999: 27) points out that if *missio Dei* is truly Trinitarian, missiologists are actually referring to "the *missio Trinitatis*" when discussing the *missio Dei.*[19] While semantic, Kirk's argument seeks to place the emphasis on the triune God that Christians profess to be Lord. In these critiques, no author argues for the removal of the term, but rather identifies the pitfalls around a catch-all ideology that must be understood in its entirety.

While Bosch (1991: 392) identifies some of these concerns he concludes that *missio Dei* is more helpful than harmful, writing "it cannot be denied that the *missio Dei* notion has helped to articulate the conviction that neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission". To affirm the term is to acknowledge God as the genesis of mission in the world. In doing this, the church must go into society acknowledging the mission and presence of God. The language and implications of *missio Dei* are structured to engage with the world in a manner that addresses the current paradigm, not claiming ideological superiority but affirming the individual or church body's witness within their context. In this, the Christian becomes a witness to the love and presence of God within their situation. If Christians are to affirm the *missio Dei* within this current paradigm it is necessary to understand the position of the church and Christian ministry within contemporary society. To comprehend this, an analysis of Murray's (2004, 2009) work on post-Christendom will help contextualise the concept of *missio Dei* laid out by Bosch.

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[19] While the author recognizes the semantic difference Kirk (1999) identifies and its theological implications, they defer to the language utilized by the wider missiological literature in referring to the *missio Dei*. Nevertheless, there is potential benefit to discussing the relational nature of a *missio Trinitatis* and the implications of this in regards to the chaplain's role as a conveyor of *communitas*. This will be briefly addressed in chapter seven.

3.4 From Christendom to post-Christendom

Murray (2004, 2009) focuses on the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom. This shift is not a direct correlation with Bosch's paradigms, but there are parallels in how both explain this transition. Murray (2009) defines Christendom as a period of time, beginning with Emperor Constantine's conversion and continuing to the 20th century, and an ethos that a society or political state embody. This space is predominately Christian, is shaped by and gives priority to the Judeo-Christian narrative, and weds the church and state, providing both with power and authority. Murray (2009: 198) notes "Critics would add that, despite its remarkable achievements, Christendom was also imperialistic, oppressive and brutal, and that it distorted the Christian faith." Murray identifies the Protestant Reformation as the beginning of Christendom's downfall. The diversification of Christian ideology, and opposing governments supporting these differing opinions, destroyed the unity and diplomacy nations once found in being Christian states. The ideological and technological discoveries of the Enlightenment further hindered the strength of Christendom's intellectual dominance. While Murray emphasizes these as key aspects that weakened the foundation of Christendom, he identifies the two world wars, the introduction of postmodern thought, and the social events of the 1960s as catalysts for the visible downfall of this period. It is at this time that signs of post-Christendom, specifically in western Europe, become more visible.

Murray (2004:19) defines post-Christendom as:

> the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within a society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence.

While it could be argued that western Europe is still undergoing the transition to a post-Christendom, Murray (2004) recognizes that this is not universal. Some geographic locations have never experienced Christendom within their indigenous cultural context and therefore cannot complete this transition. Furthermore, bastions of Christendom still survive, specifically in the US. Murray notes that even with legal separation of church and state the Christian narrative is still provided a privileged place within this society.[20] However, recent findings suggest that the United States is beginning to resemble western Europe in religious landscape, although the decline in religious adherence is not as pervasive (Pew Research Center, 2019). Murray also recognizes that post-Christendom does not mean secular or post-Christian. He identifies one of the issues with the term post-Christian is that it suggests the complete absence of Christianity within a culture.

In the transition from a Christendom to post-Christendom society, Murray identifies seven elements the that the Christian community will need to address. Two are particularly important for the role of the chaplain and the transmission of the *missio Dei.* Murray (2004: 20) argues Christianity must deal with a positional shift "from the centre to the margins" of society, recognizing that the privileged place at the center of Christendom is replaced with a marginal role in post-Christendom. Murray (2009: 199, original italics) also emphasizes the church's shift "*From maintenance to mission*: in Christendom the emphasis was on maintaining a supposedly Christian status quo, but in post-Christendom it is on mission within a contested environment". In this context, the church becomes a marginal group working within a societal structure that

[20] An example of this is the United States Senate chaplain. In the position's history all chaplains have been Christian males. A full-time paid employee of the government, the chaplain opens the Senate each day in prayer and is tasked with various duties including "teaching Senate Bible study groups, [and] encouraging such groups as the weekly Senate Prayer Breakfast" (United States Senate, 2021). The lack of religious diversity in the role and the Christo-centric nature of it demonstrate the privileged position Christianity is given in this powerful body.

does not privilege a specific religious narrative or group. Murray notes that while many bemoan this loss, the marginalization of the church is not negative, rather it requires Christians to think of new ways of approaching the wider society.

In Christendom, maintenance-oriented mission was, or is, the exportation of Christendom to assert its dominance, which can be seen through the historical pairing of mission and western cultural standards in non-western nations associated with colonial rule. It is also visible within Christendom, emphasizing conformity to societal standards that affirmed the status quo. Murray sees the personal nature of religious appeals focusing on individual evangelism and piety, and the lack of distinction between the message of the gospel and Christendom as pitfalls of this missional outlook. Furthermore, he contends that this alliance with culture and emphasis on the individual has made evangelism a negative term that warrants suspicion over intrigue. Therefore, in a post-Christendom society a new approach to evangelism and acceptance of religious pluralism will be needed. He argues that these elements are essential to Christian witness in this context. Murray (2004: 236-237) states that this work will not be easy, rather:

It will mean developing a missiology that is passionate about the Christian story, passionate about sharing this with others, passionate about defending their freedom to reject it, passionate about resisting attempts to impose religious views and passionate about friendship that is not jeopardized by divergent convictions. The foundation for this missiology is renewed reflection on how God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth operated through invitation rather than imposition.

Murray prioritizes relational encounters that are not predicated on conversion to religious and social standards predetermined by the dominant society. Instead, the Christian message is transmitted from the margins of society, not in association with state and political power. This

relational emphasis has also been highlighted by other missiologists writing about the *missio Dei* in post-Christendom.

Sundermeier (2002) argues that the *missio Dei* illustrates Christian mission in a multi-dimensional manner through mystery, freedom, pluralism, and time. For our understanding of mission, particularly how it relates to chaplaincy, it is important to emphasize, freedom and pluralism. Sundermeier argues that freedom is essential to Christian mission as it (i) comes in love from God to another, recognizing that the other is free to accept or reject that love; (ii) respects this other as a friend, forming a partnership; (iii) affirms the dignity of another in allowing them to choose for or against a faith tradition; and (iv) identifies the relational element of mission, entering into dialogue with others and treating them with dignity in this interaction. The claim of freedom within the mission of the church, and specifically the *missio Dei*, affirms the relational nature of witness as opposed to forcing a predetermined set of religious or cultural standards on a group or person.

For Sundermeier, pluralism means that one must recognize the diversity of culture and people present throughout the world, be prepared to be influenced by these group, and be open to change in this process. Sundermeier uses Jesus' ministry and practices as the ultimate goal of indigenization and inculturation, as he did not demand adherence to a specific language or normative cultural.[21] This witness is essential to the open, loving, and relational nature of the *missio Dei.* Sundermeier's analysis demonstrates how the *missio Dei* affirms the church's mission as multicultural, multifaceted and contextual in a post-Christendom society. Moving

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[21] The translation of the Christian message into various languages and contexts, and the implications of this in regards to mission are address by Sanneh (2009).

away from the Christendom legacy and embracing the notion that the western church now functions within a post-Christendom context not only requires new understandings of how the church sees itself, but also how mission and ministry are approached in this context.

3.5 Christian ministry in a changing world

Reflecting on the dispersed and fragmented nature of western society, Ballard (2009) observes that a person's work, social and home life all represent different areas that can lack cohesion between one another. This, he argues, has affected the church and its ministry, compartmentalizing religion. Ballard recognizes the need for the church community to react to this change, and sees the role of the chaplain as one response. He explicitly uses the language of *missio Dei* to describe the work of the chaplain, arguing that chaplains are vital to the missional framework of the church because of their location outside the church. This sense of dis-placement creates a difference between the chaplain and the parish minister. Ballard (2009: 20) writes:

> The congregational or parish minister works mainly in, with, and from the structures of the Church. This is the base for reaching out to the community. The chaplain, on the other hand, while having a clear link into the Church, is situated in the structures of the wider society and which provides the matrix that shapes the job. … [Due to this] There is a constant process of negotiation as the chaplain relates to the expectations of the client and those employed by and in touch with the secular context in the name of the gospel.

Ballard places the chaplain as an integral witness of the *missio Dei* within the local community, providing an avenue for God's love to manifest in a space in which the gospel is not typically proclaimed.

In her qualitative study examining chaplaincy in various contexts, specifically agricultural, city centre and market town communities, Slater (2015) affirms Ballard's theological reflection on the role of chaplaincy by providing empirical findings and theological reflection that upholds the chaplain as a central figure in the mission of the church. She contends that Bosch's (1991) focus on the *missio Dei* is critical to the ethos of the chaplain and her theology of chaplaincy is rooted in the understanding of God as relational. The services provided by chaplains and their location within a community allow chaplaincy to be a medium by which the outward looking, relational *missio Dei* can be communicated to all. Slater argues that the role of the chaplain within their community allows for authentic witness to manifest itself in interactions with people in everyday situations, particularly in relationships that are not predicated on mutual religious belief. Speaking about theologies of mission in the context of her research conducted in the UK, Slater (2015: 81) concludes:

> Chaplaincy is… a response to the perennial missionary task … to proclaim the gospel afresh in the contemporary context. In this plural, fragmented and largely de-churched society, this means that chaplains are called to minister within the different social structures that people inhabit.

Her observation transcends national borders and is applicable across western society, including the US. Intentionally locating themselves in social structures that do not focus on faith or religion, the chaplain becomes a vehicle through which the gospel can be conveyed to a changing society.

Contextually located within the wider community, the chaplain must navigate the social and cultural elements present within their context while simultaneously forging relationships with

those around them. This positioning recognizes the shift in context between Christendom and post-Christendom as the chaplain is not forcing a specific cultural or religious standard on those they interact with. Rather, they seek to form mutual connection in a position where they are not associated with the powers of society. Furthermore, their embedded nature within the community provides access and entry into situations not given to the parish minister, whose interactions are more likely to be predicated on mutual religious belief. As a result of this, chaplaincy can be seen as a manifestation of the *missio Dei*. As those who are sent, chaplains must navigate the social and cultural elements present within their communities. For the purposes of this study, the way in which this is manifested within the UK and the US has particular relevance.

3.6 Cultural shifts in the UK and the US

In a speech given in March 1946, Winston Churchill (1946) used the phrase "special relationship" to describe the relationship between the UK and the US. While Churchill was speaking of this connection in regards to the political and military alliance against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the political and military connection continues to be a priority for both nations, this phrase also recognizes the economic and cultural connection between the two countries. Both value similar civic liberties, such as pluralism and individual expression, and have been large producers, and consumers, of popular western cultural elements, such as television, literature and music. Furthermore, both have a Protestant history and have embraced religious pluralism as a civic value. The symbiotic relationship between the two nations provide many similarities, but there are also cultural differences present. Both the similarities and differences affect the work of the chaplain in either context.

Slater (2015) argues that the current socio-cultural climate of the UK has allowed for chaplaincy to become a more accepted form of Christian witness in the wider society than overt proselytization or evangelism. She identifies three elements with which the chaplain must contend in this cultural shift: (i) the rise of secularism, (ii) state policy, and (iii) the reconfiguration of spirituality. Historically, according to Slater (2015), the Church of England and Church of Scotland have held a position of privilege within society and in governmental programs. However, in recent decades there has been a shift away from Christianity's place as a privileged ideology, rather the UK has become a more secular and pluralistic society. Brown (2009) goes further suggesting that this is not just a loss of political privilege, but also constitutes a full cultural shift away from Christianity as a central facet of society, commonly referred to a secularisation.

Brown (2009: 2) argues that secularisation does not only mean that the church has declined in membership and influence, but "as a means by which men and women, as individuals, construct their identities and their sense of 'self'". As a result, it is the erosion of personal acceptance, practices, and specific behaviors that allows for the decline of Christianity in the UK. This shift occurred as discursive Christianity lost its power in UK society. Brown's (2009: 12) defines the term 'discursive Christianity' as, "the people's subscription to protocols of personal identity which they derive from Christian expectations, or discourses, evident in their own time and place". Brown (2009: 176) suggests that it was the cultural revolution of the 1960s, specifically the fall of "cultural traditionalism", including norms tied to societal elements such as gender and sexuality, that caused such a shift in the place of Christianity in the UK. This societal change produced a culture that is more accepting of differing and pluralistic views on religions

adherence and faith. Slater (2015) emphasizes that faith, particularly Christianity, has a de-emphasized place in a cultural that values pluralism as central to its thriving. This shift in culture requires the chaplain to navigate a society where religion has lost influence and is seen as one ideology among many. While the location of the chaplain allows for interaction with people of other or no religious faith it still faces the challenge of functioning as a minority viewpoint.

Second, Slater highlights recent UK legislation, specifically the Equality Act 2010, that safeguards a person not being discriminated against because of a variety of characteristics, including age, physical ability, gender, marital status, religious belief, race and sexual orientation (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021). While the Equality Act 2010 protects people from being the victim of religious discrimination, it also protects the rights of a person to speak about their religion. Although personal expressions of faith are protected, the chaplain must still be mindful of a culture that meets religious discussion with distrust or dislike, particularly in relation to evangelism and proselytism. Slater (2015: 5) asserts that for chaplaincy to be effective in a secular and pluralist society it will have to "renegotiate its practice, language and identity while preserving its integrity as faithful practice". The renegotiating of language and practice are also relevant when speaking of societal understandings of spirituality.

Slater identifies the adaptation and reconfiguration of spirituality as a final factor contributing to the chaplain's role in society. Slater acknowledges the challenge in accurately defining and engaging the term 'spirituality', as it is highly personal and subjective. In particular, Slater highlights the scholarship of Tacey (2012), which charts the use of the term from one that describes those who were deeply religious and looking to overcome the self, to one used to

describe one seeking to fulfill the self. The reconfiguration of spirituality speaks to the desire of humans to live complete and meaningful lives that meet the individual's standards of fulfillment, not that of a particular institution or doctrine. Slater (2015:16) contends that this need for a spiritual dimension of existence "suggest[s] that God is already present in the yearnings of the human spirit for fulfilment and fullness of life". She concludes that chaplaincy can meet these needs and assist those seeking fulfillment.

Like the UK, in the US secularization and broader understandings of spirituality have played a prevalent role in the transformation of the relationship between church and the wider society. Research confirms this shift, witnessing a decline in religious adherence and an increase in positive connotations towards the concept of spirituality within the country (Pew Research Center, 2019; Lipka, 2015; Lipka and Gecewicz, 2017). While there has been a decline in religious adherence it is important to remember the privileged place religion, particularly Christianity, maintains within civil and cultural life, and the country remains more religious than other industrial nations. There is one factor present that is not often discussed in Slater (2015) that bears mentioning, that of political correctness.

Writing on the history of political correctness[22], Perry (1992) traces the etymology of the phrase back to Mao Tse-Tung and the translation of his little red book, which was influential in American leftist groups during the 1960s. Perry notes that the phrase was prominent among a wide range of liberal groups of varying gender and race. She writes:

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[22] Social fragmentation in recent years in the US and UK has increased the discussion around political correctness. The determination of what is politically correct and the manner in which the term has been used in this time period is still unfolding and an analysis of its full effect on the cultures of both nations is not possible at this time.

In this context, the phrase 'politically correct' meant as many different things as the people who used it. … it expressed a combination of distrust for party lines of any kind and a simultaneous commitment to whichever dimension of social change that person was working for. (Perry, 1992, p. 15)

The term is first located by Perry in published texts in 1970 and 1971, both times by black female authors. It garnered further attention during the 1982 Barnard Conference, "The Scholar and the Feminist IX: Towards a Politics of Sexuality," specifically around the conversations regarding sexual practices. Similar to its use in the 1960s, both sides of this debate had their own understanding of the term, and believed the other was holding back liberation from an oppressed group. She concludes that the condemnation of the term harmed dialogue around the inequality that it was meant to help eliminate. Perry's article demonstrates the challenge in understanding the concept, specifically its subjective nature. Much like its use in civil discourse, political correctness provides a distinct challenge for the chaplain. Due to its subjectivity, a person may not know if they are being politically correct with others when discussing matters of faith or personal belief, even if their intention is to support another or engage in constructive dialogue. Furthermore, one could be accused of being politically incorrect by another who has a different understanding of the term. Depending on the context, this could cause the chaplain to lose access or entry to a space previously open to their work. Due to the sensitivity around political correctness, the chaplain must understand their context and the dynamics at play to successfully navigate the issue. These circumstances provide opportunities and challenges for the chaplain in relation to the *missio Dei*. As a result of this, the witness of the chaplain will need to embody specific elements.

3.7 Chaplaincy in post-Christendom

The witness of the chaplain in post-Christendom is often as a marginal, nonspecific, contextual and pastoral presence within a specific community or host organization. Pattison (2015) focuses on the marginality of the chaplain, arguing that the 'liminal' nature of their role and lack of connection with their sending religious groups are factors that contribute to this notion. However, he does not see this as a hindrance, but argues that the marginalization of the chaplain is critical to the position. He recognizes that chaplaincy cannot be a central focus of an entity as the chaplain's role is not concerned with the primary task of the host organization. Due to this the chaplain is not in a position of power. Marginality is also a strength because it reduces the risk of the chaplain's work being "controversial, disputed and scrutinised" (Pattison, 2015, p. 24). Pattison also sees the chaplain's marginal role as one that is socially acceptable in current western society. In post-Christendom, the chaplain mirrors the church as a whole in their marginal presence. How marginality was experienced by chaplains in the study is the subject of chapter seven. Just like the church at large, the chaplain's role on the margins will lead to unique and creative opportunities not present before.

Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011) also use the term liminality in association with the concept of marginalization. While not as explicit or forthright as Pattison (2015) in promoting this as a position of strength, they acknowledge that the liminality of the chaplain allows for him/her to stand in two worlds at once, being present and understanding of the challenges within the secular environment while also being a witness to the sacred. If the chaplain was central, and not marginal, this may not be possible as they might need to prioritize their position within the host organization over their chaplaincy. In situating themselves in a secular atmosphere, yet being a

witness to the sacred, the chaplain continues to be a witness to the *missio Dei*, affirming the presence of God's love within a particular space.

The marginal nature of chaplaincy also lends itself to being non-specific within a host organization. Pattison (2015) argues that the vagueness and general nature of the role without stated outcomes from the host allows for the chaplain to be present to the needs of a wide range of people. Furthermore, it allows them to be available in challenging times for a person or organization. To demonstrate this point, Pattison (2015: 25) writes, "chaplains often engage with the bits that no one else wants to address, and they do this by use of words, symbols and occasionally liturgy, formal or informal". Being present in challenging or mundane circumstances in a non-specific fashion allows the chaplain to witness to the *missio Dei* within their community; proclaiming the non-specific and inclusive nature of God's love and presence.

Due to the different locations and people that the chaplain encounters, chaplaincy is inherently contextual. Ryan (2018: 79) enquires as to how a single understanding of chaplaincy can incorporate the full-time ordained military chaplain and a part-time, volunteer, lay shopping centre chaplain, writing, "These contexts, and the work being done within them, share a title 'chaplaincy' but are too disparate to provide clear 'one size fits all' models". He does not elaborate, but his point is clear: the context of the chaplain is crucial. The chaplain must be able to understand the context in which they minister to make connections and effectively witness to the *missio Dei.* This is consistent with the work of Sundermeier (2002) who argues that the *missio Dei* must be contextual to the community a person is serving within. The chaplain enters a specific context with the goal of coming alongside those already present, respecting their

individual freedom while acknowledging the culture and norms of the community that are already established.

The emphasis on chaplaincy as a method of communicating the *missio Dei* in a post-Christendom society does not eliminate current ministry practices; rather, skills such as pastoral care need to be emphasized. Pastoral care has been traditionally used to speak of the clergy's role in taking care of those within their parish, it can also be used to describe the chaplain's role. Pattison (2008: 9) argues that pastoral care has been demoted in the conversation surrounding the church and its mission "to an ancillary, almost optional" position. However, he believes that pastoral care "if properly undertaken, it is itself an essential part of God's mission to the world… [because] pastoral care is one of the places where the humanizing vision of Christianity comes into sharp and practical focus" (Pattison, 2008, p. 9). Regardless of circumstance, being a pastoral presence in their host organization allows for the chaplain to make God's presence and love known in a space where it may not have been proclaimed. As previously stated, Todd (2018) sees pastoral care as one way incarnational theology is present in chaplaincy. Todd's argument focuses on the incarnation being made manifest through action and the power of redemption seen in enacting the Word of God. He writes, "If engagement in mission is a criterion for effective ministry, then chaplaincy, on the basis of its record of pastoral care alone, is effective ministry" (Todd, 2018, p. 40). The chaplain's role as a pastoral presence allows them to effectively witness to the incarnation and the redemption of God.

The final element of the chaplain's witness is presence. In Dunlop's (2017) research almost all chaplains interviewed mentioned being present as a part of the missional understanding of

chaplaincy. This ministerial approach allows for the potential of deep connection and mutual transformation (see Holm, 2009). In being present, the chaplain is given the ability to respond to the needs of their context, freely witnessing to God's love without expectation. With this, the chaplain manifests the *missio Dei* to all they come in contact with. Having discussed the theological foundation of mission and chaplaincy, the changes in western society and how the chaplain is witness to the *missio Dei* within that culture, it is now time to see how this witness is revealed in the sports chaplain.

3.8 Towards a theology of sports chaplaincy

Todd et al's (2014) definition of chaplaincy states that the chaplain is an embedded presence within the wider social and civil structures of a society. In modern western society, sport is a crucial social structure that permeates educational systems, leisure activities, economics and crosses international boundaries. Whitmore and Parker (2020) have argued that, much like other forms of chaplaincy, the work of the sports chaplain is grounded in the *missio Dei*. However, sports chaplaincy does not have the historical pedigree or the same institutional support as other models of chaplaincy. Evidence of this can be seen in the limited writing and reflection on sports chaplaincy when compared to military, prison, health-care, and/or education chaplaincy (Paget & McCormack, 2006; Swift, Cobb & Todd, 2015; Threlfall-Holmes & Newitt, 2011; Todd et al., 2014). Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011) argue that these areas are marginal spaces, in which the standards and norms that are implicit in a society or community are suspended, altered or affected in some way. Sport can also be considered a marginal space as the reality one inhabits while participating in this activity is different than that of the rest of society, with different rules, understandings of time and boundaries. Furthermore, the way in which a person is valued or

judged in sport can be different to the wider culture. Nevertheless, the desire of the chaplain to minister and witness within this context is consistent with that of chaplains in other marginal spaces. As is the case with other forms of chaplaincy, sports chaplains need to be mindful of the specific circumstances that they minister within, i.e., the level at which they are operating (professional, amateur, leisure/recreational, etc.), and the political dynamics around a particular sport or team. It is clear, for instance, that the ministry of a chaplain to an English professional football club will bring with it a series of challenges and idiosyncrasies that a chaplain to an amateur team may not need to consider, and vice versa.

Sports chaplains will always be a marginal presence within the sporting world, particularly at the highest levels of competitions, as their role is not to prepare athletes for competition, score the winning goal, or oversee the running of a sports entity. However, the sports chaplain's ability to work with a broad range of people in a variety of circumstances allow them to minister to the entire sporting community. A chaplain may pray with an injured player before speaking with a coach about a newborn baby, and later speak with fans about a memorial service for a deceased relative. This lack of specificity allows for the chaplain to be sent out into a team or club to address a variety of situations as a support to those in the community. In this way, the marginal and non-specific nature of the sports chaplain's work embodies the *missio Dei.*

The relational and pastoral dimension of chaplaincy allows the sports chaplain to walk alongside people, ministering as needed in their community. One example of this is supporting an athlete through an injury. For an athlete, injury can mean exclusion (being away from the team receiving treatment), a decrease in playing time or loss of employment for professional athletes. These

elements may affect a person's sense of value or worth (see Jones et al., 2020). However, the sports chaplain is given the opportunity to affirm the value of each individual, regardless of their performance for the team. Amos (2006: 85) writes:

> It is a fundamental Christian doctrine … that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. So, people should be respected and valued not just on the basis of what they can contribute on the pitch on match day. In the sight of God an injured player is as 'valuable' as anyone else – a Christian chaplain therefore seeks to minister that challenging truth, at a football club, a context where performance and results can seem to be everything.

As a witness to the *missio Dei*, the sports chaplain stands in two worlds as they console an injured player while affirming their value as a beloved child of God.

Within sport, one's value is often based on performance; be it on the field as an athlete, getting results as a manager or coach, or helping lead or grow an organization administratively. This is particularly true in elite sport, where athletes, managers, and administration are often celebrity figures within the community, country, or even internationally. This can lead to the individual being seen "through the filter of what they do rather than for who they really are" (Mason, 2006, p. 40). The sports chaplain is put in a position where they can be in relationship with the individual not predicated on their sporting role, but as a person who faces the same challenges and experiences as others. In doing so, the chaplain can reaffirm that the person has value outside their association with athletics, and that they are valued by the divine regardless of what they do. As a result of this, the sports chaplain is a witness to God's love and mission, making known God's presence and grace in a specific context.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has located sports chaplaincy theologically, arguing that it, like other forms of chaplaincy, is missional in nature. Grounding mission in the Trinity, the chapter suggested that the role of the chaplain is an incarnational witness to God to the society. This witness is particularly relevant in period of change in the history of the church as a paradigm shift, from the Enlightenment paradigm to the ecumenical paradigm, transforms the role of the church in culture and therefore the approach to ministry. Bosch (1992) suggests that the this shift in paradigm allows for Christians to take part in the *missio Dei.* The *missio Dei* affirms a relational and active understanding of God, which invites the individual into communion with the divine. While the church's changing role within society has been cause for analysis and critique, the mission of God is not irrelevant; rather the church needs to reevaluate its engagement with post-Christendom culture. The role of the chaplain has been identified as a medium in which the *missio Dei* can be witnessed throughout society, benefiting from its location within social structures. Chaplains, specifically in the US and UK, must contend with a number of different factors prevalent in the wider culture, such as a rise in secularisation, government policy in the UK, an increase of spirituality over specific religious identification, and the recognition of political correct language. To effectively minister in these contexts the chaplain will need to be marginal, non-specific, contextual and pastoral in nature. In this, elements such as practicing a ministry of presence and pastoral care allow the chaplain to connect with individuals and support them in a specific circumstance. The chapter demonstrated how the sports chaplain has the ability to do this in the realm of sport. The sports chaplain enters a structure that is prominent within society to witness to the relational and unchanging love of God. Much like others who are

served by chaplains, those in sport need the *missio Dei* revealed to them in a relationship not based on their ability, but rather based on their position as a beloved child of God.

The previous two chapters have provided a theoretical foundation for the present study. They have assessed how sports chaplaincy is discussed within the sport and religion literature and the missional potential of the sports chaplain. These underpinnings will be crucial when assessing the data derived from the present study. However, before we can analyze this data, it is necessary to address the methodological approaches utilized and structure of the present study.

Chapter Four:

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter serves as a bridge between the previous literature and theological grounding, and the research findings of the study. It will describe the methodological approach used in data collection and analysis, not only providing justification for the methods employed but also detailing challenges faced along the way. In short, this study can be classified as a small-scale qualitative study that is constructionist, interpretive and cross-national in nature. At this time, it is necessary to describe the research approach, in a general sense, before providing specific explanation and analysis later in the chapter.

From the outset, this study was intended to be qualitative in nature. The desire to interact with social actors to better understand their work and the motives behind their ministry lent itself to an approach that prioritizes narrative over numerical data. While a quantitative study may have been beneficial in gauging specific tasks, skills or attributes of the sport chaplains, measuring these elements was outweighed by the need to comprehend the motivations and meaning behind the actions of these social actors. As a result of this, the chapter will begin by addressing the theoretical approaches to the research. In this, it will address the ontological and epistemological positions utilized in the study, which can be categorized as constructionist and interpretivist, respectively. It will demonstrate how these positions are beneficial for use with practical theology, which lends itself to qualitative study. The chapter then shifts to address the use of thematic analysis, as opposed to grounded theory. It will then discuss the cross-national nature of the study before transitioning to the methods utilized to enlist participants and collect data. The

chapter will then transition to a focus on data analysis and the ethical considerations taken in the study.

4.1 A constructionist approach

Ontology focuses on the study of social entities and objects, seeking to understand their existence. A constructionist ontological approach was adopted because constructionism promotes categories in which meaning is defined as a social construct, that is, where meaning is built through the interaction between social actors reality (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2016; Charmaz, 2008, 2014; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Hammersly and Atkinson, 2019, Patton, 2015). This is opposed to an objectivist approach which posits that social phenomena have meaning outside social actors (Bryman, 2016). For example, a business organization could be considered an objective reality as its rules and regulations remain constant, despite the social actors who inhabit the organization. Furthermore, its identity and meaning is not derived from the individuals who are associated with it, rather they are defined by a mission statement, the purpose of the company or other predetermined factors. Tied to objectivism is the concept of realism, in which reality is understood as something that can be understood outside various social factors or interactions. This philosophical stance differs from relativism, which contends that one can only comprehend reality in relation to peoples' experiences. A constructionist viewpoint argues that the social actor has an active role to play in the social phenomena they find themselves within. Bryman (2016: 33) states that constructionist "implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision". While the structure of a professional sports team could essentially be considered objective, as its ethos and goals remain constant despite the social actors present,

assessing the work of the chaplain within this organizational context should be considered from a constructionist viewpoint because it deals with how different aspects of life are defined and experienced by the individual, not the organization.

The constructionist approach utilized is different than constructivism, which argues that all reality is perceived through the individual. Constructivism rejects the notion of objective reality outside the individual's comprehension of an action, while constructionism allows for the researcher to accept an objective reality, if necessary, recognizing that there may be factors external to the individual that create reality (Bryman, 2016; Charmaz, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Hammersly and Atkinson, 2019; Swinton and Mowat, 2006). In both, the researcher is asked to consider how their own perceptions and processing of reality may influence their approach to a specific scenario. Differentiating between constructionism and constructivism can be difficult as many people, including Bryman (2016) and Charmaz (2008, 2014), use the words interchangeably. For example, in a chapter within an edited volume entitled, "Constructionism and the Grounded Theory Method", Charmaz (2008) promotes a constructionist approach within grounded theory. However, in her seminal work, *Constructing Grounded Theory,* Charmaz (2014) uses the term constructivism, not even referencing constructionism or providing a justification for any difference in terminology. Shifts such as this cause issues in conceptualizing and identifying the difference between the two positions. In this study, a constructionist approach was preferred as it allowed for the possibility of an objective reality to be present outside the individual's own perception of the world around them. This ontological orientation informs the epistemological position taken, as it emphasizes the social actors' viewpoint and interpretation of a specific situation, whilst allowing room for objectivity. The ontological and epistemological

positions both acknowledge the subjective experience of the individual and understand it to affect the actions within a specific context. In this scenario, reality is not a static concept that can be devoid of human influence, but is perceived and understood through the actions of individuals.

4.2 An interpretivist stance

An interpretivist epistemological stance was taken to uncover the meaning that respondents attached to their subjective experiences of being a chaplain in elite sport settings. Interpretivism honors the differences between people and group, requiring social scientists to assess subjective meaning in an individual's or large social units' actions as opposed to assuming intent and significance behind a specific event. This approach is linked to Max Weber's idea of *Verstehen*, which seeks to understand a context by the standards of those who reside within it, identifying the meaning behind various actions, events and other cultural occurrences (Oakes, 1977). Therefore, the researcher must seek to investigate the subjective nature of the individual's experience, recognizing that to understand meaning one must also identify the reason behind an event or action and the context in which it takes place (see Allen, 2004). Using an interpretivist approach allowed for the subjective element of different contexts and actors to be explored and respected, helping evaluate and examine the data gathered. An interpretivist approach also required a non-participant approach to data collection and an awareness around the researcher's previous knowledge and experience in the field (Bryman, 2016; Hammersly and Atkinson, 2019).

The two ends of research participation, according to Hammersly and Atkinson (2019), are that of complete participant, in which the researcher is fully immersed in the field or complete observer, in which the researcher has no communication with their subjects. The authors recognize that "most field research involves roles somewhere between these two poles" (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2019, p. 89). To provide more clarity on what lies between these two ends of the spectrum, they cite Junker's (1960) four typologies of social roles in observation: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant. Given the researcher's location outside the world of elite level sport and the geographic disparities between social actors, a complete participant position was not achievable. However, the researcher was not a complete observer either, engaging in dialogue with the social actors within the study and even minimally participating during participant observations after being invited to do so by the research participants or those in the organization. As a result of this, the researcher could be described as an observer as participant. Junker (1960: 37, original underline) defines this as "the role in which the observer activities as such are made publicly known from the outset, are more or less publicly sponsored by people in the situation studied and are intentionally <u>not</u> 'kept under wraps'". This position allowed data to be collected in a manner where motives and intentions were not hidden, while also respecting the roles played by respondents. This role was also utilized when collecting data via participant observation, as the researcher was clearly not a member of the host organization and an unannounced presence would not be welcomed within the closed nature of an elite sports organization. An interpretivist position also required the researcher to be aware of their previous research and engagement in the field (Bryman, 2016; Charmaz 2008, 2012; Patton, 2015; Swinton and Mowat, 2006).

No research position is fully neutral (Charmaz, 2008) as previous knowledge of the field and the researcher's own experience is, in some form, used to engage with and interpret the data. This was no different for the present study, with the researcher utilizing their previous knowledge of the field and experience as a chaplain, all be it in education and not elite level sport, to their advantage when engaging with research subjects and analyzing data. In regards to previous knowledge of the field, the researcher was widely read in the subject matter before beginning the research and also had various relationships with sports chaplains. To be clear, this does not mean that the researcher came into the study with preconceived conclusions or results in mind, rather their previous experience was a foundation to build on. Taking a constructionist and interpretivist approach as observer as participant, the researcher was able to engage with the participants in their specific context and sought to understand the meaning behind their specific actions and interactions within that context. This allowed for the role of the chaplain in both leagues to be identified and analyzed, which in turn allowed for links to be made between the two leagues and geographic contexts. Furthermore, this approach aligned with the field of practical theology and it is to this we now turn.

4.3 Qualitative research's interaction with practical theology

A qualitative approach allows room for theological aspects to be assessed and interpreted in the data. In their work on using qualitative research methods in the field of practical theology, Swinton and Mowat (2006: 6) define practical theology as "critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world". Practical theology, as a discipline of Christian theology, prioritizes the lived experience and

practice of Christianity, seeking to understand these elements of faith in action. Given the significance provided to understanding meaning in qualtitative methods and the prioritization of the human experience and practice in practical theology, Swinton and Mowat (2006: 90-91) "suggest that Practical Theology can utilize qualitative methods to aid in this process of ensuring that Christian practice is in correspondence to the event of God's self-communication". In this, the authors see qualitative methods and data as independent from theological concepts, and vice versa. However, they also recognize the positive benefits for researchers and practitioners that qualitative data can have in understanding the implications and lived experience on practical theology. They suggest that for theology and qualitative methods to maintain this independence three things are needed: (i) hospitality, (ii) conversion and (iii) critical faithfulness. First, Swinton and Mowat suggest that practical theologians need to be hospitable to the data derived from a qualitative study, listening to the conclusions of this work without presuming that theology must amalgamate or be subservient to it. This corresponds with an interpretivist approach as it honors the subjective experience of an individual actor (Bryman, 2016). Second, they argue that qualitative methods must undergo a conversion to be brought into God's mission for the world. This intentionally provocative terminology suggests that qualitative research does not have a stated goal on its own, and that a specific aim is brought about by explicitly using it to further the work of God. Swinton and Mowat (2006: 92-93, original italics) note that conversion is not synonymous with a lack of criticism, rather "the qualitative research methods now seek to develop that critique *from the inside* and not as outsiders". Finally, they state that critical faithfulness is needed in upholding the data derived from qualitative methods and the tradition and revelation of the Christian faith. These elements align with a constructionist stance as they recognize the potential of an objective reality, namely the affirmation of the Triune God and

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human involvement in God's mission. Swinton and Mowat provide a theoretical framework that supports the use of qualitative methods in partnership with theological analysis, and this understanding provides an important lens for present research.[23]

4.4 Thematic analysis

This study did not utilize an explicit methodological framework that guided the entirety of the study, rather it employed thematic analysis as a tool to code and analyze data. While analyzing data during collection and constant comparison were utilized, both being associated with grounded theory and Charmaz (2014), the study itself does not fully employ this school of thought as a methodological approach. Grounded theory, overall, uses an inductive approach and does not prioritize the use of previous theories or concepts to analyze data. Charmaz (2014) argues that grounded theory allows for the data obtained in a study to determine and drive the theory produced from said research. In this, preconceived notions and literature should not be forced upon or control data analysis, rather, the findings themselves provide the definitions and insights desired. This is juxtaposed with a deductive stance, which utilizes a previous theory as a viewpoint by which to analyze and assess data.

While the researcher did not go into data collection with preconceived ideas of what would be found, the study was developed with specific theories and understandings of chaplaincy in mind. Specifically, data was sought to confirm whether or not sport chaplains had similar roles and

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[23] Swinton and Mowat's text not only provides a theoretical framework for practical theologians using qualitative research methods, but also features case studies of various qualitative methods used in tandem with practical theology. One such study is of chaplains within the NHS in Scotland. They detail how the study was conducted, using ethnographic observation, telephone interviews, and data coding computer software. They also share their methodological challenges and data findings. While beneficial to note, the chapter does not provide specific suggestions or guidelines for qualitative research with chaplains and, therefore, does not warrant further discussion in this context.

responsibilities as chaplains in other fields, such as healthcare, prisons, and military, amongst others, as well as the missional nature of the sports chaplain's ministry. As a result of this, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun, Clarke and Weate, 2016; Bryman, 2016) was deemed a more suitable methodological foundation. As a result of this, a more deductive approach was taken, in which the previous literature could be used to interpret the work of the sport chaplains in the study, as opposed to an inductive grounded theory,

Bryman (2016) and Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) acknowledge the popularity and lack of theoretical specificity associated with this thematic analysis. Specifically, Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that the freedom from theory allows the researcher a level of flexibility. As a result of this, the researcher does not have to conform to a specific method of collecting data and can make their own choices regarding various approaches to the research. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006: 81) argue that claiming thematic analysis as a beneficial methodological tool "means researchers need not subscribe to the implicit theoretical commitments of grounded theory if they do not wish to produce a fully worked-up grounded-theory analysis". As grounded theory was not fully utilized in this study, the researcher avoided using a grounded theory 'lite' by embracing thematic analysis. While not associated with a specific theory, Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) argue that this form of analysis corresponds with a constructionist epistemological position, writing, "thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided". This aligned with the present study because the context which the host organizations worked in could not be removed from the individual experiences of the participants. The use of thematic analysis in coding and analysis will be discussed in section 4.10 of this chapter.

4.5 Cross-national study

The study was inherently cross-national, as it sought to understand sport chaplaincy in two different geographical locations, the US and the UK. Hantrais (1996) argues that a study is cross-national:

> when individuals or teams set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different socio-cultural settings (institutions, customs, traditions, value systems, lifestyles, language, thought patterns), using the same research instruments either to carry out secondary analysis of national data or to conduct new empirical work. The aim may be to seek explanations for similarities and differences, to generalise from them or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts.

Hantrais also notes that cross-national research features many of the same components as studies completed in one country. This study aligned with this definition as it sought to provide greater understandings of sport chaplains' work in different settings while using similar instruments to collect data. To date, this is the first study of sports chaplaincy that is cross-national in nature. Bryman (2016) states that, through the process of a comparative study, cross-national and cross-cultural research can help the researcher gain a greater understanding of social realities in different contexts. Bryman (2016) and Hantrais (1996) also state that there are challenges to this kind of data collection, including funding, comparable data collection methods and ensuring that the subjects are equivalent to one another. In the context of this research, various steps were

taken to ensure these challenges were addressed to maintain the focus on the data to create a significant contribution to the previous knowledge in the field.

To ensure data collection was consistent, interviews took place primarily by telephone, via Skype, or through email correspondence. In-person data collection, be it interviews or field observations, were limited in both settings. When seeking to provide equivalent respondents, research subjects were selected from comparable competitions, in terms of sporting level, financial significance and cultural status. As a result of this, chaplains were chosen from the wealthiest and most prominent leagues within the respective countries, the NFL in the US and the EPL in the UK. Both leagues are the highest level of competition in their respective sports and countries. In 2016-2017, the season in which interviews took place, the leagues were two of the top three professional sports leagues in revenue internationally with the NFL making $12.5 billion in profits and EPL reporting $6.4 billion, making it the wealthiest soccer competition in the world (Garcia, 2018). Finally, as was previously discussed in the introduction, both leagues feature prominently in contemporary culture, as they are extremely popular and have large domestic and international audiences that consume their product. Due to these similarities, it was deemed that these leagues were comparable in contexts. In both leagues an equal number of chaplains were interviewed using them the same questions. Even with these steps taken there were still contextual gaps between the two nations, such as terminology used, that provided challenges within the study. An example of this can be seen with the phrase "safeguarding."

Oliver and Parker (2019: 543) define safeguarding as "the protection of the health, wellbeing and human rights of children/young people and adults at risk, enabling them to live safely and free

from abuse and/or neglect". In the UK this language is normative but is not used frequently in the US; rather terms such as 'mandatory reporting', 'boundary training' or best practices are employed. These terms are frequently associated with human resource departments and boundary training sessions that may be required by employers. Not only was the terminology different but practical expectations surrounding this concept were as well. UK based chaplains receive safeguarding training from SCUK and/or their denomination. As previously discussed, SCUK is a para-church organization that helps train, support and coordinate chaplaincy throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Additionally, chaplains at English football clubs must complete background checks before beginning their placement as clubs work with minors or vulnerable groups. As a result of this, questions in the study surrounding safeguarding training, policy and reporting structures were readily answered by EPL chaplains. However, when these same questions were asked to chaplains in the NFL, responses were not as in-depth or specific. Safeguarding training was not normative for NFL chaplains, and no host organization had expectations surrounding boundary training or mandatory reporting, which are comparable concepts in the US to safeguarding. Furthermore, NFL chaplains did not work with minors at their clubs and were not required to complete background checks before accepting the role. This subject will be assessed further in chapter seven. The lack of exposure to safeguarding as a term and as a set of associated practices made conversing on this topic challenging. This was overcome by explaining what safeguarding was, its comparable forms in the US, and asking specific questions on any kind of background checks, boundary training or mandatory reporting requirements provided by host organizations or para-church groups. Overall, potential issues with cross-national studies were identified and addressed in appropriate manners, providing for

comparable and equivalent data to be gathered that highlights the similarities and differences between elite sports chaplaincy in the two nations.

4.6 Participant sampling

Given the closed nature of the two leagues (see Bell, 1969) research participants were sought using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows for participants to be selected strategically, based on relevance to the research questions and focus areas of a study. Hammersly and Atkinson (2019) argue that a researcher may need sponsors who help them understand the field and to work with 'gatekeepers' to gain access to a specific context. When seeking participants in the UK, the researcher began by corresponding with a staff member at SCUK. All officially recognized club chaplains[24] in the EPL work with the organization, and it has the backing of various bodies within English football, such as the EPL, the English Football League (EFL), and the Professional Footballers Association (PFA). This individual acted as both sponsor and gatekeeper, providing helpful suggestions on approaching chaplains as well as a list of EPL chaplains with a brief biography on each. Participants were sought from both larger and smaller clubs, in terms of financial circumstances, notoriety, and place within the league. These factors were taken into account when considering potential participants in the study to allow for different contexts to be represented as well as to explore similarities and differences present. Given the openness of the gatekeeper, it was possible to approach a wider sample of the population of EPL chaplains. The support of staff member at SCUK provided an unofficial

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[24] At times, in both the NFL and EPL, individuals will claim to be a club's chaplain even if they are not officially endorsed by the host organization. Oftentimes, these individuals have spoken to a team for a pregame worship service, in the case of the NFL, or have been affiliated with members of the organization at a time of need, such as officiating a funeral. While these roles may have been beneficial, they do not provide the title of 'team chaplain', even if some self-identify in this way.

endorsement for the research to potential participants and all four chaplains accepted quickly, confirming Hammersly and Atkinson's (2019) observations on the value of a gatekeeper in gaining access. This was not the case with NFL chaplains.

Unlike the UK, in the US the researcher had no previous engagement with a para-church organization that could provide endorsement for the study. Initial contact was made with twelve chaplains in the spring of 2016 through a variety of mechanisms, including Twitter, Facebook, chaplains' personal websites or email. Seven chaplains did not respond or declined to be a part of the research. Two chaplains cited too busy of schedules and two did not believe their host organization would approve of their participation, further supporting the notion that the NFL is a closed organization. Without the help of a well-respected, long-time NFL chaplain, who had initially been contacted via his website, making a number of informal introductions it may not have been possible to recruit US chaplains for the study. This chaplain had initially agreed to take part in the research, but stepped away from NFL chaplaincy the season before data collection began. In both the EPL and NFL, snowball sampling was not employed as the gatekeepers did not take part as research participants in the study, although the SCUK staff member did respond to questions regarding evaluation, accountability and professional development. Even though the researcher could not be as selective in the NFL in terms of participants, this did not hinder the ability to gather thick descriptions that provided credibility to the study and a significant contribution to the previous knowledge in the field.

4.7 Participants

A total of eight participants, four from each league, took part in the study. Questions may be posed about the sample size and whether this hinders the credibility of the work. However, given

the closed nature of elite sports, a small sample size was expected. This is supported by Adler and Adler (2012: 8), who contend that "a small number of cases, or subjects, may be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for a research project. This is especially true for studying hidden or hard to access populations". Participant background, such as ethnicity, age or experience, was not taken into consideration during selection. Initially, a focus was placed on achieving a diversity of host organizations, meaning size and success of an individual club, to try and achieve as close to a representative sample as possible. As previously mentioned, even though two teams may play in the same competition, it does not mean they have the same financial resources, recent success or social platform. In response to this, contact was made with organizations that represented a range of these factors. This was more of a factor in the EPL as more options for contacting chaplains were available and there is less financial parity than the NFL. The participants experience in sports chaplaincy ranged from 2-28 years. Three of the eight chaplains in the study had served more than one club or sport as a chaplain. Only one chaplain had previous experience as a professional athlete, playing in the NFL for five seasons, on the active roster of his respective teams for three seasons. All but two chaplains were involved in other forms of ministry, primarily in local parishes and ecclesiastical outreach initiatives. The two chaplains who considered sports chaplaincy their primary vocation were on-staff with Athletes in Action in the US. All chaplains identified as Christians, however their backgrounds, both denominationally and in their upbringing, differed.

Figure 4.1 Table of Participants (see also Appendix One)[25]

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Full-time Chaplain	Ministry in Parish	Years in Sports Chaplaincy	Years with Current Team
NFL						
Todd Dempsey	30s	White	No	Yes	2	2
Anthony Thomas	30s	African-American	Yes	No	4	4
George Brown	50s	White	No	Yes	13	13
Steve Smith	50s	White	Yes	No	28	25
EPL						
Lewis Sherwood	50s	White	No	Yes	14	9
Alastair McDaniel	30s	White	Yes	No	4	4
Peter Monahan	40s	White	No	Yes	11	7
Duncan Murray	50s	White	No	Yes	12	12

All but one chaplain identified as conservative or evangelical, theologically, with the outlier refusing to be categorized in his beliefs. Given that the majority of chaplains in the study identified as conservative and/or evangelical Christian, the relationship between this identifier and the work of respondents is addressed at various times throughout the work. Five chaplains were raised in the Christian faith, although four of these chaplains considered their upbringing nominally religious. Likewise, six of the eight chaplains were ordained by either a denomination or independent church. In the UK, three of the four chaplains were ordained in the Church of

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[25] All participant names and their clubs have been changed to pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

England, with only one NFL chaplain ordained in a more mainline Protestant denomination.[26]

All of the chaplains in the study had graduated from university, and all but one had received a

Masters degree, although the focus of their Masters work varied. As previously mentioned, two

chaplains had completed advanced degrees focused on sports chaplaincy. While participants

came from a variety of professional, religious and educational backgrounds, there was a lack of

gender diversity in the study. All participants in the study were men; however, there is no

knowledge of a female serving as a chaplain to a team in either league, although numerous NFL

chaplains' wives lead Bible study for wives and girlfriends of athletes and coaches. To the

researcher's knowledge, no chaplain's spouse provided this kind of services in the EPL. In terms

of ethnicity, seven chaplains were White and one was African American. As the research

progressed, it became apparent that speaking with a staff member at a para-church organization

within each country would provide beneficial information. Specifically, understanding how these

organizations approached elements of accountability, evaluation and professional development

would provide a counterpart to how the chaplains described these components. Two para-church

leaders, one from SCUK and one from AIA, were also interviewed. These organizations were

selected due to their work with sport chaplains in their respective geographic locations, with

these specific individuals identified due to their work with individual chaplains. These interviews

were more specific in their focus and differed from the interviews with the chaplains as they

concentrated on the professional development offerings and accountability for sports chaplains

required by their respective organizations, and did not address the personal work or theological

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[26] Mainline Protestantism is often juxtaposed to evangelical Protestantism. Seeking to define "mainline Protestant" Putnam and Campbell (2010:14) write, "The term 'mainline' connotes that these are the denominations that have historically been the closet thing to establishment churches in America". They note that these church bodies are often more modernist in their approach to theology and have struggled in the post-World War II era as evangelical Christianity grew in the US. Groups that Putnam and Campbell (2010:15) identify in this category include, but are not limited to, "Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians [and] Congregationalists".

perspectives of the individual's interviewed. Given the scope of a cross-national study, data collection took place in a variety of ways.

4.8 Data collection methods

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The study was designed with the primary method of collection as interviews, however, the researcher desired to add participant observations, if possible. This element of the study is detailed later in the chapter. Initially, three interviews were planned, correlating to the pre-season, mid-season and post-season of each competition. NFL and EPL schedules are different, with the NFL in season from September to February, including playoffs, and the EPL from August to May. This meant that the interviews took place at different points in the year.

Figure 4.2 Interview Timetable

First Interview (Pre-season)		Second Interview (Mid-season)		Third Interview (Post-season)		Follow Up Interviews		Para-church Organization Interviews	
NFL	*EPL*	*NFL*	*EPL*	*NFL*	*EPL*	*NFL*	*EPL*	*NFL*	*EPL*
July-August 2016	July 2016	November 2016	January 2017	February-May 2017	June 2017	August 2017, January 2018	February-March 2018	February 2019	May 2017

Participant Observation	
NFL	*EPL*
December 2016	July 2016, January 2017

Interview questions covered a wide range of topics including the participants' religious and educational backgrounds, history as a sports chaplain, the roles they fulfil in their club, accountability structures both inside and outside their host organization, amongst other topics. The aim of these questions was to comprehend the expectations and responsibilities surrounding the chaplain's work and understand how this compared to those within another geographic and sporting context. Bryman (2016) states that a benefit of semi-structured interviews is that they provide the interviewee a wide range of responses. In turn, the semi-structured format allows the interviewer to pick up on various 'emergent' topics and ask for elaboration or clarification from the interviewee. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were also beneficial when a topic had already been addressed in the session. For example, a number of questions in the interview guide focused on the host organization's evaluation of the chaplain. However, numerous chaplains were not evaluated by their club and the remaining questions did not need to be asked. Being able to modify questions was a benefit as it limited repetition.[27] Interview questions were reviewed with the primary supervisor before sending to participants to ensure rigour and have an external review of the questions. Structuring the interviews over the span of a season allowed for various events and narratives to be addressed. For example, in the preseason interview one EPL chaplain described being marginalized by his manager. This manager's contract was terminated by the club halfway through the season and the access of the chaplain improved under the new manager. This information was valuable to the study and tracking the development of this issue would have been difficult in a different timetable.

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[27] Planned interview questions for all interviews can be found in Appendix Four.

The majority of data was collected through interviews, which primarily took place on Skype or through telephone conversations, although a small number were conducted in person or via email correspondence. Email was utilized as a last resort when respondents stated they were unavailable for a telephone or Skype calls. For example, Wimfield United's Lewis Sherwood was moving and beginning at a new parish when the third round of interviews was conducted, and stated he would only be available for a short phone interview and would need to complete the remaining questions via email. In total, email was utilized three times to gather data. It is important to recognize that this collection method, while advantageous in honoring the respondent's times, has its drawbacks. Bryman (2016) notes that online interviews are less spontaneous, with respondents having more time to reflect on their answers and provided edited responses. This also can be an advantage as it provides a more considered response. Another negative of this method is the inability of the researcher to probe and ask follow up questions. While these elements were considered, gaining data in some form was deemed more beneficial than not, hence why this method was employed when needed.

Of the 34 interviews conducted only four took place in person. Bryman (2016) recognizes the benefits of telephone usage in research, particularly for groups that are dispersed over a large geographical area. Telephone interviews were also beneficial in accommodating the various schedules of chaplains in the study. Numerous chaplains were pressed for time, particularly during the season when balancing their roles inside and outside the sporting organization, and the ability to talk while they were in transit was beneficial. Chaplains also spoke on video call via Skype. Al Khateeb (2018) and Lo Iacono et al. (2016) highlight the benefits of using Skype as a medium for completing qualitative research. Lo Iacono et al. (2016) argue that Skype and similar

mediums allow researchers to engage with subjects internationally without issues of travel or finance. Skype also allows for less expensive international calling, which made connecting with UK based participants easier. Kings and Horrocks (2010) argue that one of the problems in using Skype for qualitative interviews is potential technical problems that may cause issues with audio or video. While technology has improved in the interim, limiting this concern, there were issues with sound quality in interviews conducted in this study when one or more party had a poor internet or telephone connection.

4.9 Interview process and observational research

Interviews were scheduled with chaplains typically one to two weeks in advance, working around their schedules. Likewise, interview questions were sent in advance to the chaplains via email. As previously mentioned, telephone and Skype were the two primary methods of communication; however, in person interviews took place with two EPL chaplains for the first and second interviews. This was due to the researcher's ability to travel to the UK, once specifically for participant observations. In-person interviews took place in a coffee shop with one chaplain, and at the club's training ground and in his car for the other. Three interviews were also conducted via email when a suitable time could not be found to complete the interview via telephone or Skype.

Interviews varied in length and depth depending on the interviewee, ranging between twenty-five minutes and one hour and thirty minutes. Overall, interviews typically lasted one hour. Bryman (2016) advises that flexibility is crucial in qualitative interviewing. He states that allowing respondents the freedom to answer open-ended, conversational questions that the researcher can follow up on maintains the standard of a semi-structured as opposed to a structured interview. In

this, the researcher needs to honor the responses of the participant. When describing the length of an interview, Bryman (2016) focuses on a respondent elaborating on answers but does not focus on issues of brevity. While questions of quality may arise around the shorter interviews, they must also be placed in context. The shortest interview, lasting only twenty-five minutes, was the first interview with a respondent, in which rapport was still being built. Subsequent interviews were longer, with the participant more willing to elaborate on answers. Furthermore, this respondent was more reserved and measured in his responses than others in the study. In this, his brief responses were not necessarily an issue of data quality, but appeared to be a personal characteristic. For example, this same chaplain spoke candidly about the challenges of being marginalized within his host organization and the frustrations that this brought. This demonstrates that brevity in response did not equate to a lack of openness.

Transcription was completed verbatim. Transcription took place after the initial three interviews were completed. At the beginning of this process, the researcher had planned to do all the transcription by themselves. However, due to the extended and unforeseen amount of time transcription took, the completion of transcription was supported by the use of professional transcribing services. After transcription of the three initial interviews had taken place it was apparent that additional data collection with the same participants would be beneficial. Charmaz (2014) argues that researchers often need to go back to participants with new inquiries based on previous analysis. This primarily took the form of clarifying questions for participants from the initial interviews that came up in transcription. However, initial analysis demonstrated the need to better understand accountability and evaluation structures used by sports chaplains. As a result of this, individual interviews were added with para-church organization leaders from SCUK and

AIA, respectively, to discuss how the organizations provide accountability for chaplains associated with their organization. The SCUK leader was the same person who provided contact information for chaplains and responded to questions in email form. The AIA staff member had initially declined to assist, but agreed to speak over the phone at a later date. This came about after the retired NFL chaplain previously mentioned talked with the staff member, further showing the importance of a gatekeeper when gaining access to a closed structure. Researcher notes were taken during and after all interviews and were used to help inform initial analysis and were compared with transcribed interviews. Alongside semi-structured interviews, limited field observations also took place.

Participant observation was desired from the inception of the study. Observational research aligns with the constructionist approach utilized, as this form of data collection allowed the researcher to witness research participants interacting with social actors in their specific context. Swinton and Mowat (2006) argue that observational research helps create a thick description and boost confidence in a researcher's analysis. While the closed nature of the participant's host organizations and the geographic disparity between the clubs meant that consistent observation would not be possible, two chaplains, one in each country, agreed to observation and three site visits, one in the NFL and two in the UK, occurred. In all instances, the researcher utilized the observer as participant designation as discussed above (see Junker, 1960). Bryman (2016) and Hammersly and Atkinson (2019) discusses the importance of taking observational field notes. During observations, the researcher took rough notes, when possible, and completed full field notes immediately upon returning to their hotel. Writing detailed field notes allowed for specific events to be documented while they were still vivid, not allowing time to erase key facts.

4.10 Data analysis

Delamont (2012) emphasizes the importance of pairing data collection and analysis throughout the research process. She states that analysis does not merely begin once data collection is complete, but is ongoing with the writing up of field notes. In aligning with Delamont, the researcher's data analysis was an iterative activity throughout the data collection phase, using constant comparison to assess potential themes and categories during data collection. All interviews were transcribed in full and secondary analysis took take place utilizing thematic analysis. The benefits of this methodological approach have been discussed above. Braun and Clarke (2012) identify six phases to completing thematic analysis. These steps and how they were utilized is demonstrated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Utilization in Current Study
Familiarization with data	Transcription and rereading transcription while listening to recorded interviews
Generating initial codes	Notation within transcribed interviews
Search for themes	Colour coordinating comparable data
Reviewing potential themes	Isolating colour coordinated data and assessing themes
Defining and naming themes	Produced summary of themes, shared with primary advisory
Producing the report	Writing of data chapters

Note: Six phases taken from Braun and Clarke (2012: 60-69)

Given the lack of research in this area, the analysis sought to provide thematic descriptions from across the entire data set. Braun and Clarke (2012) emphasize that thematic analysis seeks meaning over a data set, as opposed to a single piece of data. With the explicit aim of understanding sports chaplaincy in relation to other forms of chaplaincy, a deductive lens was used during the analysis and coding process, which allowed for specific dimensions and themes of the research questions to be identified in coding. However, elements such as the marginality and liminality of the sports chaplain, which will be addressed in chapter six, were identified in a more inductive manner throughout the coding process. Initial themes were identified through constant comparison, transcription, and the initial reading of the data set. During a rereading of the transcripts, passages were highlighted as a method of searching for themes (Braun, Clarke and Weate, 2016; Bryman, 2016). These themes were reviewed by moving text into a new document with quotes from other chaplains to allow for data from across the set to be compared side-by-side. This allowed for data to be categorized in a precise manner. Finally, quotes and notes were organized and brief summaries were written of each theme. No coding software was used in the analysis process.

4.11 Positionality

Patton (2015: 33) states that the individual conducting a research study "is the instrument of the inquiry." In this respect, they are a part of the study, even if they try to remove themselves. Therefore, being mindful of their positionality not simply within the research context but society more generally is beneficial to a researcher's understanding of their work and their overall approach to research. In terms of my own positionality, I identify as a cis-gendered, white, American male who began my Ph.D. research in my late twenties and concluded it in my early

thirties. I was well-versed in the sport and Christianity field before beginning this work, both in terms of academia and practical experience. Academically, this familiarity provided a baseline for understanding the key literatures and themes within the field. Practically, I have participated and watched sport throughout my life and have been a practicing Christian since I was a child. Vocationally, I am also a religious leader, having completed a Masters in Divinity, being an ordained leader of a liberal mainline Christian denomination, and working specifically within education chaplaincy. Similar to the academic benefits, these previous experiences allowed me a familiarity and comfort within the research setting that may not have been present otherwise. This positionality influences the two key assumptions of this study. First, the work is done from a Christo-centric viewpoint, working from the Christian narrative. Second, it assumes that chaplaincy is, overall, a beneficial ministry. In this, it does not question the religious assumptions or vocational call of the participants, rather it speaks to and through these lenses.

4.12 Rigour, credibility and trustworthiness

From the outset, the researcher sought to complete a study that was rigorous, credible and trustworthy. Assessing the debate around legitimacy in qualitative research, Tobin and Begley (2004: 390) argue that the concept of rigour should not be rejected in qualitative approaches, but rather that "rigour is the means by which we show integrity and competence" within research. Bryman (2016) and Tobin and Begley (2004) both cite Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for trustworthiness: (i) credibility, (ii) transferability, (iii) dependability, and (iv) confirmability.

Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement and audit trails. No specific threshold was found by the researcher to measure prolonged engagement, however, the breadth and depth

of experience and engagement in the subject area provides an adequate threshold. Research was conducted over the period of nine months, with a follow up interview conducted after transcription was complete. In total, 34 interviews were conducted with ten research participants and three field observations took place. This data was combined with the researcher's previous knowledge and engagement with the subject area and those who work within it to achieve a credible study. An audit trail was kept by producing interview questions beforehand, through notes taken during interviews, audio recordings of interviews, transcription of these interviews, notes taken during field observations and write-ups of field observations within an hour of leaving the site. This not only helps establish credibility but also dependability, which addresses elements of external and internal examination (Bryman, 2016; Tobin and Begley, 2004). Dependability was also achieved through designing the research study specifically to address the research questions, and recording data analysis including themes and categories.

Transferability corresponds to external validity and how the research can be applied outside the context of the specific study (see Bryman, 2016) and incorporates generalization. Bryman (2016) notes that generalization has been critiqued in qualitative research as studies tend to be limited and, therefore, difficult to be representative of an entire population. Nevertheless, Williams (2000) contends that qualitative researchers often make generalizations within their work, arguing that that the concept of '*moderatum* generalizations' affirms an interpretivist approach while making room for generalizations. This stance, according to Williams, is inherently modest, not claiming the same authority of a statistical generalization or making an overarching generalization (see Payne and Williams, 2005). Yet, it still provides foundational claims that can be further tested and scrutinized. Transferability and generalization in this study are closely tied

to understanding sports chaplaincy in relation to other forms of chaplaincy as well as situating sports chaplaincy within the wider missiological discussion in Christianity. In both circumstances, the study makes generalizations that can transfer to these areas.

It is recognized that total replication of a qualitative study is nearly impossible, given that one cannot revert back to a specific time with the exact circumstances and actors. Furthermore, complete objectivity is also impossible. Confirmability seeks to affirm that the researcher has acted in good faith and not allowed personal agendas or biases to dictate the work. The researcher was not only personally mindful of this, but also took feedback and critique from their supervisors in data analysis and reporting to strive for confirmability.

4.13 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was granted by the Faculty of Applied Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Gloucestershire and the research complied with, and adhered to, the ethical guidelines stipulated by the British Sociological Association (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice (see British Sociological Association, 2017). More specifically, each of the study participants was provided with project information via introductory e-mail, which outlined the aims of the research enquiry to ensure that every participant understood the process of how they would be engaged and represented within the study. Furthermore, and adhering to BSA (2017) guidelines, this document provided detail concerning the right to withdraw, matters pertaining to the collection, storage and representation of the data, alongside factors related to confidentiality and anonymity in respect to names of people, locations, or organisations, which arose during the research.

Given the public nature and prominence of these ministry settings, confidentiality was crucial. Research participants were provided with informed voluntary consent and information in relation to the scope and purpose of the research. All research was overt, as covert research was not needed because this did not comprise the participants or the safety of the researcher. Pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation for host organizations and individual chaplains. Any identifying information has been removed to further protect research participants. As previously mentioned, biographies of chaplains interviewed can be found in Appendix One.

4.14 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to outline the research methodology and methods used within this study. It has demonstrated why a constructionist ontological approach and interpretivist epistemological stance were adopted when completing this research. The methodological framework utilized sought to honor the subjective nature of the chaplain's experience. Not only have the methodological positions been identified, but the specific measures taken in the selection of participants, the data collection and analysis process. It has recognized challenges faced in this data collection process, particularly in relation to the issues of gaining access and trust to a closed structure. In this, gatekeepers and sponsors were crucial to attaining participant trust. Data was collected using different methods, primarily semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Throughout the data collection process, the challenges of completing a cross-national study had to be kept in mind. In particular, balance was sought in collecting data in both nations. The researcher was fortunate to complete participant observations and speak with para-church leaders in the US and UK, providing further data. Data analysis utilized thematic analysis

and identified numerous themes. In this, chaplains provided information to the larger questions identified as areas of interest before interviews began, but also shed light on specific aspects of sport chaplaincy in elite sport settings that were not addressed before. The methodological approach utilized allowed for a credible study that is rigorous and contributes a significant element to the existing literature in the field. With these elements addressed, it is to the analysis of the data which we now turn.

To begin, the roles and skills of the sport chaplain will be addressed. It is crucial that this topic is addressed first, as it will provide the foundational understanding of the role which will allow us to analyze and assess various theoretical elements, such as marginality and call, that would not be as clear without a comprehensive view of the position.

Chapter Five:

Roles and Skills of the Chaplain

5.0 Introduction

As discussed in chapter two, Ballard (2009) argues that missional ministry in western society needs to be contextual. While others in the field affirm the contextual nature of chaplaincy, they also recognize that, given the diverse contexts in which chaplains serve, defining the work of the chaplain is inherently problematic (Newitt, 2011; Paget & McCormack, 2006; Slater, 2015). Notwithstanding this, Newitt (2011) and Paget and McCormack (2006) both identify various roles that the chaplain typically demonstrate: (i) religious duties typically associated with a minister, (ii) pastoral care skills, and (iii) the ability to respond to and serve the needs of those within their care. This chapter explores how chaplains within the study fulfilled these functions within their host organization. Data findings demonstrated that while these three areas were present within the ministry of each chaplain, there are circumstantial and contextual differences within each ministry. Therefore, the role of each chaplain was unique to the context they served. The chapter begins by addressing the three roles discussed by Newitt (2011) and Paget and McCormack (2006) alongside chaplaincy literature surrounding these elements. It then explores the research findings that demonstrate how these areas were present in the chaplain's work. All three elements will be assessed in detail, identifying similarities and differences between the geographic locations. It affirms that all three roles are seen in the work of the sports chaplains interviewed; however, US-based chaplains tended to prioritize religious duties affiliated with a minister, while UK-based chaplains focused on pastoral care. The chapter concludes by suggesting that regardless of location, the priority of all chaplains in the study was to be an effective support to those within their host organization. Furthermore, it suggests that each

position was contextual and understanding this context was crucial to comprehending the work of the chaplain. Finally, it contends that the relational and service-oriented approach of the chaplain was counter to the dominant culture of elite sport, and, through this approach to their work, chaplains witnessed to the love and mission of God. First, it is important to address the competencies of the chaplain as they are identified in the wider chaplaincy literature.

5.1 Competencies of the chaplain

Newitt (2011) recognizes the challenge present in seeking a single coherent and detailed definition of the role of the chaplain, noting that the range of contexts that chaplains work within makes this difficult. To overcome this, he uses chaplain's job descriptions to identify commonalities amongst those in the field.[28] From this research, Newitt (2011) identifies various commonalities within the role of the chaplain. Three of these areas overlap with the work of Paget and McCormack (2006), who focus on various forms of chaplaincy and identify skills common within the field. The areas of overlap can be categorized as: (i) religious duties typically associated with a minister, (ii) pastoral care skills, and (iii) the ability to respond to and serve the needs of those within their care.[29] It is to a further explanation of these three elements that we now turn.

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[28] Newitt's (2011) work is featured in Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011) alongside case studies written by chaplains in various sectors, such as military, prison and education, amongst others, and theological reflections on chaplaincy. He does not detail his methodological approach or provide specific details regarding the number of job descriptions analyzed or what sectors they represent. He notes that he used personal experience and other chapters in the text in his synthesis of the role and skills of a chaplain.

[29] In addition, Paget and McCormack (2006) present a fourth competency, the chaplain as an intercessor, arguing that the chaplain is an advocate for individuals or organizations and can be a liaison between the two.

5.1.1 Religious duties typically associated with a minister

The chaplain is often identified as a religious leader within the context they serve. As a result of this, the chaplain may be asked to lead rituals or ceremonies associated with specific religious traditions. Given that chaplains serve in predominately secular contexts, these services may feature some kind of deviation from the norm or take place at atypical times and locations in response to the needs of the community concerned. While Linville (2016) critiques the use of hotel conference rooms for worship services in sports, his discussion of location demonstrates how chaplains use spaces not typically associated with religious worship to perform such services. Paget and McCormack (2006) argue that chaplains function as witnesses to their religious tradition in a predominately secular environment. While they criticize overt evangelism, they argue that chaplains "by their character and actions— their presence— they begin the relationship that might open the doors for sharing their faith message" (p.16). This corresponds with Holm's (2009) emphasis on the chaplain as a relational presence, allowing chaplains to live out their understanding of the world and to point people to the spiritual dimension of existence. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008), Linville (2016) and Ferrin (2008) recognize that US-based sports chaplains' primary responsibilities often tend to be these religious duties. In this, chaplains are asked to lead prayers, Bible study and worship, or officiate various services such as weddings or funerals for those within the organization. Skills in leading ritual and worship are paired with pastoral counsel and guidance.

5.1.2 Pastoral care skills

Newitt's (2011) research reveals that the leading of worship and pastoral care are the two skills most desired by potential employers. In her seminal text on pastoral care, Doehring (2015: 190,

original italics) defines pastoral care as "supportive and crisis care offered by ordained and lay leaders within Christian and Jewish communities. The adjective *pastoral* refers to the image of the shepherd found in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and traditions". Doehring takes a narrative approach to care, in which the caregiver seeks to understand and support the individual and their story. In this, the pastoral care worker prioritizes listening and compassion as they support the individual in their time of need. While neither Newitt (2011) or Paget and McCormack (2006) provide a specific definition of pastoral care, both view listening, confidentiality and encouragement as essential to this task. Newitt (2011: 106) argues that "the chaplain is called to give attention to familiar situations, to see beyond them or see them differently and to engage more deeply with the humanity and spirituality within them". Therefore, Newitt contends, that the chaplain provides a space in which the ordinary nature of existence and the situations people find themselves in can be transformed into moments of deep personal reflection. The importance of pastoral care is affirmed throughout the sports chaplaincy literature as a core practice in the field (see Ferrin, 2008; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Johnson, 2008; Kelber, 2009; Kenney, 2016; Lipe, 2006; Maranise, 2016; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, 2021; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008; Waller & Cottom, 2016).

While chaplains are often sought in a time of crisis or challenge, Paget and McCormack (2006) are clear in distinguishing between chaplaincy and mental health counseling, recognizing that chaplains can provide more immediate assistance; however, if a person needs a longer-term counseling relationship this is something that the chaplain may not be qualified to provide. Newitt (2011) and Paget and McCormack (2006) recognize that the spiritual nature of the chaplain's role differentiates them from other professionals, such as social workers or mental

health care professionals, that provide pastoral care, as it allows the chaplain to speak to the spiritual dimension of a given circumstance. This notion is affirmed in sports chaplaincy literature by Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) who argue that the ability to offer spiritual and pastoral support is something that differentiates the chaplain from a sport psychologist.

5.1.3 The ability to respond to and serve the needs of those within their care

The literature suggests that a chaplain's capacity to provide pastoral care coincides with the ability to respond to the needs of those within their host organization (Doehring, 2015; Dunlop, 2017; Holm, 2009; Todd et al., 2014; Todd, 2018). Newitt (2011) suggests that this responsiveness is combined with self-awareness, allowing the chaplain to be mindful of their own response to the circumstance. Paget and McCormack (2006) address this competency by describing the chaplain as healer. By this they do not mean a physical healer, such as a doctor or shaman, but rather:

> the healing function of chaplaincy encompasses key skills that address the whole person: being present, listening, encouraging, intervening in crisis, and teaching or providing information… For the experienced spiritual care provider, the art of 'hanging out' with patients, clients, victims, or team members becomes an intentional event that leads to providing a calm presence during times of stress or chaos. (Paget & McCormack, 2006, p. 27)

As healer, the chaplain demonstrates concern for the well-being of the individual through the trust that has been established by 'hanging out' in a particular space. The notions of presence and hanging out correspond to the work of Holm (2009), Todd et. al (2014), Dunlop (2017) and Todd (2018) who describe the incarnational presence as crucial to the ministry of the chaplain. The

chaplain's ability to respond to the needs present supports Ballard's (2009) argument on the embedded chaplain, in which the chaplain's presence is normative within that facet of society. The importance of being present is consistently emphasized in sport chaplaincy literature (Jones et al., 2020; Kenney, 2016; Linville, 2016; Lipe, 2020; Mason, 2006; Paas, 2008; Smith, 2017; Stewart, 2021; Waller and Cottom, 2016). Reflecting on his work as an Olympic chaplain, Pass (2008) states that the major sporting event itself is not the most important part of sports chaplaincy, but rather it is the consistent presence in the life of those who the chaplain is serving where the effect of the chaplain is felt most. Lipe (2020) affirms this notion, speaking of the practical value of 'hanging out', when appropriate, amongst a team. In this, Lipe argues that the chaplain is given space to be present and engage with members of the organization, allowing for relationships to be built so that the chaplain can better serve those in the organization. Similar to other forms of chaplaincy, the notion of being present is vital in the work of the sports chaplain.

While not exhaustive, the three elements of religious duties typically associated with a minister, pastoral care skills and the ability to respond to and serve the needs of those within their care encompass common areas identified with the role of the chaplain. To positively minister within a given context, the chaplain needs a proficiency in all three domains and this was demonstrated by NFL and EPL chaplains within the study.

5.2 Religious duties typically associated with a minister

All chaplains within this study articulated, to varying degrees, their position as a spiritual presence within the organization which they served. Affirming the work of Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013), chaplains saw this as a distinct and valuable element of their role. For Wimfield

United chaplain Lewis Sherwood, this spiritual component is what differentiated his work from that of the club's counselor:

> I never say I'm a professional counselor. I'm not trained as a professional counselor. But you're there to pray with people, you're there to be the God-person in the club. … If you haven't got a desire to really have an expectation that God can move and change people's lives, then for me, all we're doing is a form of social worker. … And frankly, they're better people than me at that.

Sherwood was not the only chaplain to see the religious or spiritual nature of his work as distinctive. Fellow EPL chaplains Duncan Murray and Alastair McDaniel echoed similar themes in terms of their work at their respective clubs. In addition, Todd Dempsey of the NFL's Winburg Warriors articulated the benefit of having a spiritual presence in the team in relation to character growth and on field performance:

> The reason [the head coach and general manager] have me there is because there is a spiritual component to winning and there is a spiritual component to doing life as a team; and so my goal, from their perspective not from mine, is to help create an environment where there are men teaching other men how to live with character. And so … the secular answer is that I provide, and I help the team provide, an environment for building each other up; a culture of teamwork, of encouragement, of support, accountability and helping them grow as men. And so what that looks like from a spiritual component; your mind, your body, is wrapped up in your [spirit] as well. And so growing men spiritually helps them have less distractions and perform better on the field.

In linking a healthy spirituality with a healthy identity and the potential for success that can come out of those elements, Dempsey's justification of his position helps provide validity to the role of

the sports chaplain within a professional sports organization. This affirms King et al. (2020), Oliver and Parker (2019), and Roe and Parker's (2016) assertion that chaplains can play a beneficial role in the holistic support of an athlete's development. However, Dempsey's comments also affirm Hoffman's (2010) critique that sports chaplains are complicit in the 'win at all costs mentality' of elite sport by wedding growth in the spirit with on field success.

While the spiritual nature of their roles came out in all three skill areas, all chaplains described religious duties as a part of their positions within their respective clubs. Collectively speaking, the religious duties associated with the chaplain in this study fell into four primary categories: (i) providing chapel services, (ii) facilitating Bible study, (iii) offering prayer, and (iv) administering ceremonial rituals such as funerals, weddings, and baptisms. These religious duties were more prevalent in the NFL for chaplains, with no EPL chaplains holding a chapel service within their host organization. While chaplains in both leagues offered one-to-one discipleship opportunities, a time for the chaplain to guide individuals in their faith, these were not as prominent or common in regards to the other religious duties associated with chaplaincy. Discipleship will be discussed in more depth in chapter eight. We now explore each of the four religious duties individually.

5.2.1 Chapel services

All NFL chaplains offered or coordinated some form of worship service the evening before every game. Chaplains described services that were roughly a half hour in length and were scheduled in between other elements of pre-match preparation. This was consistent with all four NFL chaplains. At home games the chaplain would typically lead the service, while away game

chapels would be led either by the chaplain, if they had traveled with the team, or a guest preacher who the chaplain had arranged. When asked about how they selected guest preachers, various NFL chaplains stated that they invited pastors or other chaplains who were local to the city in which the game was being played. Oftentimes these were individuals that the chaplain knew and trusted, and many fulfilled this duty in the past. Two of four NFL chaplains regularly traveled with their teams, flying on the team plane, staying with the team at their hotel and accompanying the team to away matches as an official member of the traveling party. A third occasionally travelled, but not officially with the organization. As a result of this, he had to cover his own transportation costs. Given that the majority of professional football games in the NFL are played on Sundays, there is a utilitarian element to offering a chapel service for athletes, coaches and staff. This was articulated by Todd Dempsey:

> I'm providing a service that they can't necessarily have because they are working on Sunday. So for coaches, for players, I am creating a fairly non-sustainable church setting for them because they can't go to church during the season. So they have church brought to them on a Saturday night as opposed to a Sunday morning.

While the chaplain is providing a service that otherwise would not be available to people involved with Sunday work, chapel services take place the night before all games, even those not on a Sunday, making it an optional part of the team preparation for each game. This suggests that, the chapel service is a pre-game ritual that is valued regardless of which day the game takes place. Linville (2016) questions the motives of chapel before every game, asking if this makes the service a form of good luck charm as opposed to authentic space for worship? Linville encourages chaplains to be introspective and question their own motives and the motives of those attending, suggesting that both the chaplain and athlete/coach may have ulterior motives for

participating in this type of ritual. Linville continues by critiquing the lack of connection between the local church and pre-game chapel services. Rather than connecting individuals with the local church, Linville observes, pre-game chapel is a substitute for attending worship. He suggests that this is due to the shorter time commitment, fifteen to thirty minutes as opposed to an hour, and accessibility of pre-game services, as they take place at the athlete's place of employment. While convenient, Linville (2016: 38) warns that this form of worship, centered around speed of service and motivation for competition, "runs the risk of aiding spiritual anemia". Dempsey recognized the temporary nature of this form of worship service, using the word 'unsustainable' to describe the impermanent nature of this community. In this, Dempsey was not seeking to supersede the local church, but rather fill a need for those who could not attend. It is unclear if he encouraged members of his team to attend a local church out of season. Martinsville Power chaplain George Brown actively encouraged athletes on the Power to join local churches. Brown, a local pastor in Martinsville, welcomed players to his congregation but openly supported players attending any house of worship. In this, the priority was engagement with the local church, both over his congregation and even the team chapel services. He said:

> One of the things I encourage is guys to be a part of church…if a guy is not a part of our church, but he is a part of another church, and he doesn't even come to chapel I am not upset at that. If a person has a walk with God I don't think it means they have to come to chapel. A lot of people think they have to and so a lot of teams, you'll find other Christians on the team like, 'why aren't you coming to chapel?' What I try to tell them is, 'hey look, it's ok they are not coming to chapel.' If they are connected to God, connected to the church I'm not going to complain about that.

Brown's advocacy regarding Power player's involvement in local congregation goes against Linville's critique regarding the disconnection between pre-game chapel and the local church. However, Brown was also the only chaplain in the study who explicitly advocated for this, suggesting that his prioritization of this element is not necessarily normative. Linville's concerns around chapel as motivational talk or the justification for why people attended were not addressed by the chaplains interviewed, and all saw their services as a beneficial element of the team's pre-game preparation.

Chaplains stated that services typically lasted a half hour, and the scheduling and length of worship was determined by the team. This was consistent with what was observed when the researcher was able to attend a pre-game worship service at the Ely Eagles training facility. An account of the visit is located in appendix two. While Steve Smith was the only NFL chaplain observed in person, other chaplains described similar structures and constraints regarding their chapel services, particularly with the amount of time. One chaplain noted that if he 'went over' people would leave as the meetings after his service were required appointments and being on time was expected. This affirms the work of Linville (2016: 35) who argues that time is the number one issue compromising "the authentic spiritual formation of athletes and coaches" in elite sport. In line with what chaplains described, Linville describes how chapel services are often fit in around other required meetings, with those appointments being the priority over worship. As previously mentioned, Linville contends that the structure and context of these types of 'worship services' hinder the ability to engage and foster spiritual growth. The central element of these services was a sermon delivered by the chaplain or guest speaker.

Each chaplain had a different way of selecting their theme for the message. To the authors knowledge, no chaplain used the lectionary as a means of selecting scriptures, rather they would often have a theme or preach through a book of the Bible. Todd Dempsey preached through the Gospel of Mark during the season. Travelling with the team he could preach a chapter a week, intentionally selecting Mark because there are sixteen chapters in the book and sixteen games in a season. As previously mentioned, Linville (2016) questions whether sermons given in these services are more focused on preaching about God or motivational talks before a game. In the service observed, Steve Smith wed scripture, Ephesians 5, with the well-known self-help and business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.* Focusing his talk on the theme of time, he discussed how the way those present use their time now will have an effect on what occurs later. Smith consistently brought his message back to the Christian faith, but, nevertheless, also had elements of a motivational talk present as well, affirming the concerns expressed by Linville regarding the content of these messages. While chapel services were standard within the NFL, they were not evident in the EPL.

No EPL chaplain in the study held a pre-match chapel service comparable to the services in the NFL. This can be attributed to a variety of historical and present-day factors. Historically, the presence of evangelical Christianity within the US and the intentional focus on evangelical leaders to use sport as an avenue for proselytization has helped normalize the practice of offering worship services within elite sports settings (see Baker, 2007; Ladd and Mathisen, 1999). The historical nature of evangelical Christianity's relationship with elite sport also influences the nature of current chaplains, who prioritize the preaching and teaching of scripture, either through worship, Bible study or discipleship. As discussed in the introduction, the rise of sports

chaplaincy in the UK was not tied to a specific Christian tradition. As a result of this, practices such as proselytization of athletes or leading worship have not been associated with UK-based sports chaplaincy. Furthermore, the societal secularisation addressed in chapter three created a space in which the overt sharing of religious beliefs or evangelization have been deemed inappropriate (Brown, 2009; Slater, 2015). The combination of these factors created a culture within UK football clubs where the spiritual elements offered by a chaplain, such as worship, were not seen as a priority by host organizations. Rather, the chaplain's ability to offer pastoral care are seen as the focal point of the position. This distinction between US and UK based sport chaplaincy is noted by both Weir (2016) and Linville (2016). Approaching the subject from a historical perspective, Weir (2016) highlights chapel services as foundational to the work of the sports chaplain in the US, connecting this to the longstanding relationship between sport chaplaincy and evangelical Christianity mentioned above. He details how UK sports chaplaincy began with the intent of providing pastoral care, demonstrating that this difference is longstanding. As previously discussed in chapter one, Linville (2016) identifies various distinctions between sports chaplains in the US and UK, specifically identifying the approaches to evangelism as a central difference. Linville (2016: 33) states that US sport chaplains are more likely to focus on proclamation of the Gospel, whereas UK-based chaplains "are more discreet [in their approach to evangelism] and … relationally oriented". This corresponds to the work of SCUK, which states that chaplains are to be "pastorally proactive, and spiritually reactive" when working with sports organizations and their personnel. As a consequence, chaplains are to seek opportunities where they can offer pastoral care and respond to the spiritual needs within a specific organization. For example, if a chaplain was asked to pray with an individual they could respond to this request but initiating prayer may not be contextually appropriate. This is opposed

to NFL organizations, where the spiritual and religious components offered by chaplains were seen as the primary function of their role. However, this lack of opportunity was not seen as a negative by EPL chaplains. Alastair McDaniel, chaplain at Oakhill FC, articulated his concern with identifying the chaplain solely as a person who leads worship before the match, "We don't hold a church service, we don't have mass and then go off and play a football match. Chaplaincy is far deeper than that." For McDaniel, to associate chaplaincy only with worship coordination was to not fully grasp the role of the chaplain. The tenor of conversations with NFL chaplains would suggest that they agreed with this statement, seeing chapel as one facet of their role and not their only priority; even though chapel was often one of the only clear expectations and requirements from the host organization. While only NFL chaplains held pre-game worship services, chaplains in both leagues facilitated Bible studies within their host organizations.

5.2.2 Bible study

All NFL chaplains held multiple weekly Bible studies during the regular season and this, like leading worship, was a key expectation of their work. The makeup of these events was divided by different demographics within the club, such as players, coaches, staff, wives and girlfriends or couples. Bible studies for the wives or girlfriends of players were often run by the chaplain's wife. George Brown, chaplain of the Martinsville Power, stated that the separation between groups was normative, "usually coaches and players separate [for Bible study] and that's kind of a cultural reality in the NFL." This separation may be, in part, down to the power dynamics between coaches and athletes. Within an elite sports organization, coaches can greatly influence an athlete's career, for better or worse, causing an athlete to potentially act in a different manner around the coaching staff. Conversely, coaches may behave differently in front of athletes as

opposed to their peers. Due to this, separate studies allow for each group to engage with the Bible in a group of their peers in the organization. One can look at this division between athletes and coaches and affirm the need to separate the two groups, citing the desire to make individuals feel comfortable sharing without fear of judgment or backlash. However, this separation also upholds the current status of elite sport which supports a hierarchical model of power. In his brief discussion on sports chaplaincy, Ellis (2014) critiques chaplains who merely support the status quo; rather, he suggests that chaplains should be prophetic in their approach to challenging these systems. Bible studies divided by role and power dynamic affirm a hierarchy that the Christian scriptures reject (see, for example, Galatians 3:28), and can be seen as a space in which a prophetic voice could push against the present reality. No chaplain discussed this as an option, suggesting that challenging this norm would be difficult.

The content covered in these groups varied between chaplains. Some would align their chapel messages with Bible study themes, while others would read a devotional text with those in their study or focus on a specific book of the Bible. For George Brown this was dependent upon who was in the study and what they wanted to focus on. In this, Brown served those present by first identifying their needs at the beginning of the season and then shaping the Bible study curriculum around the group's requests. Bible studies took place primarily in season, as the majority of athletes were not full-time residents of the town where their organization was located. Todd Dempsey offered Bible study for players, coaches and operations staff in the off season, but this was not as well attended by players due to the lack of players living locally. Dempsey said that there were only three or four consistent attendees who lived in the area, with other players, on average an additional three or four per week, coming when they were in town.

Dempsey followed a similar pattern to his in-season study, going through a book of the Bible with the group.

Even though Anthony Thomas had the support of the head coach, the executive leadership at the Casey Tiger's did not support his ministry. He had limited access to team facilities, only being allowed in once a week for Bible study. As a result, he felt marginalized within the organization; however, he believed that he was making an impact through Bible Study.[30] Speaking midseason, he said:

> last Thursday I had sixteen guys at Bible study; on a roster of fifty-three [players] that's not bad. And then our couple's study, if everyone comes, we have fourteen to sixteen couples. My wife's study is the same, eighteen to twenty women weekly. So, it is just neat to see that people are being impacted by the ministry.

Thomas noted that the player's Bible study was set on the official team calendar by the head coach. This was important to Thomas, making it known to all that the coach explicitly set aside time each week for this event and endorsed the meeting. While all NFL chaplains led Bible study, only two EPL chaplains offered them within their host organization.

Premier League chaplains Lewis Sherwood and Peter Monahan had held Bible studies, but these were not as consistent as those led by NFL chaplains. Lewis Sherwood met with athletes at a local coffee shop, but this was not a regularly scheduled event. Midway through the season, Sherwood expressed disappointment at the lack of engagement with Christian athletes, including not meeting for Bible study. Sherwood appeared frustrated with players for not seeking

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[30] The impact of marganilization on the sports chaplain will be addressed in chapter seven.

opportunities for engagement but also with himself for not consistently providing such occasions. Monahan held Bible study once a month at the club for any players who wished to attend. He noted that the desire for this practice had grown as the club moved up the divisions, bringing in more international players, particularly from Africa and Eastern Europe, who had explicitly requested a Bible study. Sherwood and Monahan's clubs were in close proximity to one another and athletes from both clubs had joined an ex-player's Bible study that included current players from multiple clubs in a specific geographic region. This study met every four to six weeks at the former player's home, allowing athletes from multiple clubs to engage with one another. When these chaplains discussed hosting Bible study it did not appear to be as formal or regimented as NFL Bible studies. The other two EPL chaplains within the study were not opposed to leading a Bible study, rather this type of meeting was not requested by those within the host organization. Similar to leading worship, leading Bible study was not an explicit requirement of the position, as it was in the US. This further affirming the contextual differences Weir (2016) and Linville (2016) identify regarding the work of sports chaplains in the two locations. While worship and Bible study tended to be more US-centric activities, all chaplains participated in leading prayer.

5.2.3 Prayer

All chaplains in the study were available, in some capacity, for prayer with members of their host organization. Detailing their findings from a qualitative study on the role of prayer in the lives of Christian athletes, Czech et al. (2004: 6) found that athletes utilized prayer in four ways: (i) "performance related prayer", focusing specifically on the individual or teams performance in competition such as safety and the ability to perform at the highest level; (ii) "prayer routine",

meaning the ritualized element of prayer before, during or after an athletic event; (iii) "thankfulness" be it for opportunity, ability or a specific performance; and (iv) "the acceptance of God's will", which can be understood as the athlete's understanding that God had influenced the competition, either in victory or loss. These themes suggest that prayer is used as a coping mechanism in times of stress, a ritualistic element of competition, as well as team bonding. Numerous elements of Czech et al.'s findings, particularly the first two themes, were seen in the present study. To properly assess these, it is important to discuss how chaplains offered prayer and when.

As previously mentioned, all chaplains facilitated prayer within their host organizations. How explicit this practice was depended on the context of the chaplain. All mentioned being available during times of stress or bereavement for all affiliated with the host organization. For example, Kinsford City chaplain Duncan Murray would pray with an individual, if appropriate, in a time of need but did not advertise this service. However, other chaplains were explicit about these offerings or had established routines around prayer with members of the host organization. Peter Monahan met regularly with players at the Tibsbury Rovers' training ground to pray. He noted that the group had been growing and his aim was for the athletes to see prayer as a vital part of their Christian life. Two chaplains in the NFL and one in the EPL regularly prayed with players and coaches before matches, either individually or in small groups. Todd Dempsey and Steve Smith led their entire teams in prayer pre and/or post game, depending on the circumstance and outcome of the contest. Dempsey stated that the first thing that occurred after a game in the locker room was a prayer which he led and that he would, on occasions such as Thanksgiving, be asked to do an extra prayer in the locker room to mark the holiday or event. These prayers would

take place with the entire team and coaching staff present. Steve Smith also led his team, the Ely Eagles, in the Lord's Prayer pre-game and another prayer post game in the locker room. Furthermore, he would pray with players from both teams in the center of the field post-game. Smith noted that, during home games, if his team had won he would ask a player to lead the prayer and if they had lost he would do so. Smith did not give a specific rationale for this practice, but it is interesting to note the lack of prayer from a competitor in the event of a loss. The ritual of voluntary post-game prayer featuring both teams at the center of the field is normative in the NFL, and often features players and coaches from opposing teams. While on-field post-game prayer was voluntary, both Dempsey and Smith's prayers in the locker room were required for all players and coaches. The consistency of these prayers and their fixed places within the pre-game or post-game structure of the team affirms the ritualized element of prayer and its perceived benefits around athletic performances highlighted by Czech et al. (2004). However, Czech et al.'s work focuses specifically on Christian athletes who desire to incorporate prayer into competition. It did not address prayer being a requirement for all people involved regardless of belief or desire to participate. To the author's knowledge, no research has been completed on required prayer within sports and how those who do not wish to partake feel about their participation. While more common in the NFL, one EPL chaplain provided pre-match prayer.

Lewis Sherwood led pre-match prayer before Wimfield United home games with the manager and a small group of players in the manager's dressing room, a practice he had undertaken for numerous years. This was a voluntary time of prayer was described in the following manner:

[Our prayer time is] open to people whether they're Christians or not. So we get lads who

are Christians and lads who are not who just want to come for a bit of quiet. … I do this

five minute thing where I always make some point, I always mention Jesus, always do a

Bible verse and then we just pray. I pray in a huddle for the game, and I never pray for

the result. I always pray about injuries, about families and really my point there is just a

bit of quiet, a bit of peace and ask for God to bless the game and bless them, bless their

talents.

Sherwood's experience in leading pre-match prayer corresponds to a number of Czech et al.'s

findings. First, Sherwood offered prayers related to performance. Czech et. al (2004) state that

within this theme, prayers may be a way to reduce stress, ask for safety against injury or for the

athlete to perform to their best ability. All three of these elements were either verbalized by

Sherwood or observed by the author during field observations.[31] Sherwood identified that this

was a time of quiet and calm for both Christian and non-Christian players, which can be

associated with a desire to decrease stress. Quick to point out that praying for the match did not

mean praying for victory, Sherwood detailed praying for safety before each match. Finally,

Sherwood prayed for athletes and coaches talents to be blessed and for them to be used. This was

observed during a field observation. On this occasion, Sherwood only prayed with the manager

focusing his words on the manager's decision-making and giving him peace. Before the time of

prayer, it was confirmed that an athlete who was scheduled to start would not be able to due to a

technicality regarding his status as a member of his national team. The home nation's FA would

not release the player from his duties, and therefore, could not play in the match. Sherwood's

prayer's for peace for the manager were in direct response to this situation, and can be seen as a

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[31] A write up of the field observation can be found in appendix three.

way he sought to provide calm and reduce tension. As this occurred before each home match, Sherwood's time of prayer was also a ritualistic element of the team preparations. Interestingly, some non-Christians attended these and found them beneficial. This would suggest that Czech et al.'s (2014) findings could apply to non-Christians as well, particularly if the chose to participate.

Peter Monahan led an external prayer group who prayed for the club and his work within the organization. The group was hand-selected by Monahan and featured a variety of local people, including parents of academy athletes, local church leaders and lay people. Monahan described the group as such:

> I have a little prayer group that pray for me anytime I go inside [the club]. I always have a little get together with them because I don't see them face-to-face that much in the season but they try to be available to pray for me when I am in each time. … They are people from mainly the local community…. I think there is about eight of them now who are in the group. And they are a group I have met or self-selected from things I have spoken at or times I have been across to one of the coffee shops, so people I trust to give them a minimum amount of information and just know that they will be praying. So the start of the season I will always meet with them and sort of the big prayer for the last few seasons has been is the new manager, [it would] be good to know the door is still open [and] that God still wants me in there.

The formation of this groups suggests that prayer was important to Monahan, not just in terms of leading others, but in grounding his own work and identity as a witness to the Christian faith within a primarily secular context.

5.2.4 Occasional offices

Amongst the numerous duties that Peter Monahan outlined at Tibsbury Rovers, he noted: "I do some of those what I would call occasional offices" such as weddings, baptisms or funerals. Defining these ceremonies as occasional offices, a term used in the Church of England to describe these three rites, is appropriate as they are not primary, yet still play an important part in the role of the chaplain. All but two chaplains in the study referenced being a part of these occasional offices in some form and all were licensed or ordained to complete these rites by an ecclesiastical body. Numerous members of Steve Smith's club, the Ely Eagles, had experienced some form of loss during the NFL season when interviews took place and Smith had attended two funerals as a representative of the team at those services. One funeral took place on the other side of the country and Smith had flown home in a private jet with the player who had lost a family member so the athlete could make practice the next day. Steve Smith and Anthony Thomas had presided at the weddings of current or former players. When describing these events both men spoke in a tone that suggested that this was normative. While not as common a practice in the NFL, many EPL clubs offer memorial and scattering of ashes services at the stadium or in their memorial gardens for people in the community upon request.

Alastair McDaniel and Duncan Murray both had led scattering of ashes services, spreading the ashes of a deceased individual, for their respective clubs. These services took place within the club's memorial garden or on the stadium pitch. Heskins (2006b: 129) highlights the importance of this service, arguing that the choice of final resting place is a significant element in the remembering of an individual. As a result of this, when a family decides to spread the ashes of a

loved one at a club, it signifies the importance of the space and organization for the deceased. In helping facilitate these services, the chaplain, as an extension of the club, provide what Heskins (2006b: 132) deems a "personal touch" that is not typically seen from the club to their supporters, concluding "the place of pastoral care in communities like this has real importance; supporters appreciate it because they are left feeling like real human beings with real human feelings and not simply as somebody else's investment". For Heskins, the officiating of these services provided an opportunity to provide pastoral care to those in need, widening the scope of their chaplaincy to those who supported the club. Similar sentiments were expressed by McDaniel, who described this service saying:

> [Oakhill FC] have a memorial garden and you can request the chaplain [to lead a brief service]. And I think I've probably done. … if I count up how many I've done over four years, its easily around the eighty mark at least. … There's pastoral care of families that want the memorial service. That is more sort of along the lines of what I would do for a funeral service, with perhaps less contact because families are travelling from all over the place.

Like Heskins, McDaniel's reference to the pastoral care that accompanies these memorial services identifies a crucial part of being the chaplain. Almost all chaplains within the study referenced a time in which they had been contacted by their respective club when a member of the organization had experienced a death within their family. Oftentimes, the chaplain was contacted shortly after the event, with their response and the follow up steps associated with this type of grief counselling depending on the context and, more specifically, the wishes of the grieving party. This further demonstrates that even though duties may be similar for chaplains, each context is different and requires its own unique response to specific situations. This notion will continue to be affirmed when discussing how chaplains within the study approached pastoral

care situations. Those critical of sports chaplaincy, such as Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010), fail to acknowledge the support sport chaplains provide to members of their host organizations, regardless of the individual's religious belief, during a time of bereavement. This type of care pushes against the narrative of sports chaplains as primarily focused on evangelism or that these are individuals seeking to leverage their work with elite athletes for personal gain. This section affirms the chaplain's role as one that, in part, fulfills the duties typically associated with a minister. While the specifics of how this occurred were contextual, the chaplain's ability to lead specific rituals or engage with the spiritual dimension of existence made them unique within their host organizations. Alongside these duties, chaplains saw pastoral care as a central element of their work.

5.3 Pastoral care skills

All eight chaplains provided some level of pastoral care to athletes, coaches, staff and others associated with their clubs. Chaplain's responses affirmed previous literature on the place of pastoral care in elite sports settings, seeing it as a central task of their work (Ferrin, 2008; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2016; Waller, 2021; Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, 2008; Waller and Cottom, 2016). The degree to which this was sought out or permitted, in relation to the chaplain's access or the amount people were referred to the chaplain, was dependent on access and expectations from the club. The expectations and access of the chaplain will be briefly discussed here, and is the central focus of the next chapter. Due to limitations regarding time in the Casey Tigers' facility Anthony Thomas worked primarily with athletes and their families who sought out his services, not engaging with many staff other than the head coach. In the UK, restrictions from the first team manager meant that Duncan Murray did not have access to

Kingsford City's first team and primarily engaged with staff, although he did not limit who he would minister to:

> the very bottom line is I am there to offer pastoral support to anybody who wants it, and that could be from a steward on a match day to the manager, to the stadium staff, to the players, to the coaching staff, catering staff, families of young players and anything; and [I] have ministered to, more or less, all of those [groups].

Regardless of the restrictions placed upon him, Murray remained open and prepared to care for anyone associated with the club. While Murray and Thomas' issues around access hindered their ability to provide pastoral care to all within their organization, others did not have the same challenges. Many chaplains were given an opportunity by their respective club to introduce their work, allowing athletes to know about the pastoral care available.

Four of the eight respondents, two from each league, were provided time to introduce themselves and their work to the entire team or to the first-year athletes each season. Todd Dempsey and Steve Smith were provided time to speak with new players to the NFL during first-year orientation sessions run by their host organizations. Dempsey was also employed by the Winburg Warriors to help facilitate the rookie orientation to the NFL and used this as a platform to introduce himself and chaplaincy. Dempsey, a former NFL player, led several sessions regarding life in the NFL and spent time with the athletes during this period, allowing him to build relationships with new players. Smith would also introduce his work at his club's via this avenue, although he would not play any further role in the training. Dempsey and Smith spoke positively about this opportunity, however, they only spoke to new players to the league. As a result of this, the same introduction would not be made to new members of the team who were

already in the NFL or returning athletes. Even though they, or the role of the chaplain, may be know to returning players, a yearly introduction to all athletes may have been beneficial to their ministry. This was not the case for two chaplains in the EPL.

At the beginning of each season, EPL chaplains Peter Monahan and Lewis Sherwood were given time in front of the entire first team at their respective club. Monahan described this in the following terms:

> The sports science team will always give me a little slot [at the beginning of the season], a half hour to introduce myself [and] talk about what I think the chaplain should do to the whole squad. So we'll typically have a number of new players so it is always good to meet and introduce yourself to them. I will enjoy the banter of those who have been around a long time who will give their usual responses as I try to describe in detail what the chaplain does.

Monahan's connection with the sport science team is an example of the collaboration between sport chaplains and sport psychologists Gamble et al. (2013) calls for. In their qualitative study on sports chaplains and psychologists in the EPL, Gamble et. al (2013) sought to understand both roles and how they can work with one another. The study found that both entities have similarities, and are, at times, marginalized in football clubs; however, the majority of sports chaplains in their study said they did not work with the team's sport psychologists, and vice versa. As a result of this, the study suggests that by collaborating with one another they can provide consistent support to those in their care. Monahan referenced this type of collaboration with sports science staff in various interviews, commenting that this working relationship was mutually beneficial. While not specifically referring to the sport psychologist, Monahan's work

with the wider sport science staff would suggest that Gamble et al.'s (2013) call for collaboration is beneficial and can yield positive results.

When asked what kind of banter he was subject to, Monahan noted that the athletes mostly said he is there for a free meal. While appearing to be a small joke the banter is telling. Banter can have negative and positive dimensions. Analyzing gender identity and how it pertains to informal learning and socialization, Parker's (2006) qualitative research study on academy trainees within an elite level English football club speaks to the role of banter in socialization within the club. Parker (2006: 696) observed that banter was "a central part of everyday life" for those in the club and that it not only connected trainees with one another, but also prepared them for social interactions with the senior team. Parker (2006) notes that the humor used by trainees was often derogatory, specifically around issues of race, gender and sexuality, and was, in some form, preparation for even more severe derogatory remarks at the senior level of the game. As a result of this, while banter played a role in socialization it was not affirming or inclusive. Overall, banter was seen as a form of initiation that must endured to gain acceptance. Returning to Monahan's experience of banter, the ability for long-term members of the club to joke easily about the chaplain shows a level of comfort and acceptance that demonstrates Monahan's place within the organization. This level of comfort could be seen, particularly to new members of the group, as a sign that this is someone who is trusted by those already established at the club. Furthermore, Monahan spoke of the interaction positively, demonstrating his comfort with the informal joking. It is important to note that literature on the role of banter in sport does not always paint this form of humor in a positive light. As previously mentioned, Parker's (2006) findings highlight the racist, sexist and hypersexualized tenor of these conversations, which

many would deem problematic. In a review of UK sports safeguarding protocols and duty of care, Grey-Thompson (2017) argues that informal banter is common in elite sports settings, but when this turns negative it can lead to bullying and harassment, be it physical or verbal. Oliver and Parker (2019) also raise concerns over the use of banter in youth soccer, specifically in regards to understanding it as a safeguarding concern when it becomes more serious or harmful. While not applicable in Monahan's example, it is important to acknowledge that his experience represents one side of how banter is received. In their brief introductions to athletes, the chaplains were given a space to advertise their services, let players know they were present to support them and begin to form relationships with those new to the organization.

Chaplains recognized that forming relationships was essential to their ability to provide effective pastoral care. In defining pastoral care, Lewis Sherwood placed relationships at the core of his work:

> So pastoral care really is part of meeting people where they're at and then loving them. Loving them for who they are and hopefully showing them Jesus in some way. That's pastoral care. Doesn't matter whether they're a footballer or whether it's the lad on the way in at the gate, they're all equally loved by God. … [Pastoral care] demands different things and it's finding the right person. That's the crucial thing. … Chaplaincy is all about relationship. It's all about the right person, the right touch; and that takes time.

Sherwood recognized that not only were relationships crucial, but that they would take time to form within a given context. Chaplain's also understood the individual nature of pastoral care as each interaction was unique and different. EPL club Kinsford City's chaplain, Duncan Murray, articulated this in his definition of pastoral care, saying that it "is not [a] formula really, and it is

not a one size fits all thing, it is just trying to flow." The individual nature of this kind of care is recognized by Kenney (2016) in his article on pastoral care in sports chaplaincy. Kenney (2016: 12) uses "the four historic functions of pastoral care — guiding, healing, reconciling, and sustaining" originally outlined by Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) as the key functions in this work. While Kenney (2016) analyzes all four areas and their implications for sports chaplains, he notes that not all four competencies are necessarily used at one time, rather circumstance determines which area is needed. In this, the author supports Murray and Sherwood's view of pastoral care, recognizing that it is always contextual and relational as it is dependent on responding to the individual factors present in a given situation. Waller and Cottom (2016) also cite these four elements, arguing that good sports chaplaincy is focused on providing this type of care, as opposed to establishing a ministry that is seen, by others, to be successful.

Chaplains in both leagues were creative in how they approached the formation and maintenance of working relationships within the club setting. Todd Dempsey of the NFL's Winburg Warriors described the way in which he intentionally tried to foster relationships while players were together at away matches, noting how travel often facilitated opportunities for personal conversations with athletes. Peter Monahan described a page in his diary that kept track of how many weeks pregnant a player's wife or girlfriend was so he could converse with them about this important element of their life. Both examples demonstrate methods utilized by chaplains to make connections within their host organizations. Five of eight chaplains, three in the EPL and two in the NFL, used the sport science and medical teams within their clubs to learn of players or staff who may need or want pastoral support. As previously mentioned, Peter Monahan worked

with the sport science staff at Tibsbury Rovers. He described how they worked with one another in the following manner:

> I'm part of the sport science and medical team, so the head of that is the club doctor. I will always go and see him and he may give me pastoral situations to pick up… so I might be engaged in individual player's care, if there is a particular issue. We have had a couple players [with] pretty long-term injuries and the club are pretty good, through the main medical rector, at actually bringing me in and with the intention of setting up a formal conversation with me and the player.

Monahan's use of the sports science team to engage with athletes affirms the work of Gamble et al. (2013) and Roe and Parker (2016), who argue that the benefits chaplaincy offers are better utilized when a part of the wider holistic and structural network of the sports organization. Roe and Parker's (2016) research on how the chaplain fits in the implementation of the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP)[32] at the Huntley Rover's Academy revealed that being associated with the structure of the Academy support staff not only boosted the awareness of chaplaincy but also demonstrated that the club had confidence in the chaplain's ability to positively affect those within the organization. Monahan's context was unique within the study in regards to being brought in by the club as a part of player care, however, it does share similarities with the work of Hemmings and Chawner (2019), which details the work of the authors as a sport psychologist and chaplain to a professional cricket team. The text details how they approached player welfare as a team, working with one another to provide consistent care to those within the organization. Similar to Monahan's experience, the ability to work with one another as caring professionals allowed for more holistic support to be given within the club.

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[32]The Elite Player Performance Plan is a national strategy implemented by the EPL in 2012 to increase the number of home-grown elite football players.

Chaplains were often called upon during times of crisis or loss. Alastair McDaniel recounted a conversation with an organizational member who unexpectedly lost a child:

> There was a [staff member at Oakhill FC] whose son jumped off a balcony on holiday, … it was tragic. I can remember having a forty-five minute conversation on my mobile phone to this [person] who is travelling around, hardly comes into [town]. But I just said, 'Someone let me know about this. I'm just here for you and your wife if you need.' We had a big chat. I then emailed [him] some resources from Care for the Family[33] around bereavement.

This was the first time that McDaniel had spoken to the individual, and he did not mention any other conversations with him. Even without a previous relationship, McDaniel was seen as a receptive listener in a time of need. Anecdotes like this demonstrate the benefit of a pastoral presence within an institution, providing necessary support in challenging times.

Various writings on sports chaplaincy argued that chaplains can be seen as a confidential and neutral presence whom a person can speak to (Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Heskins & Baker, 2006; Maranise, 2016; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010). Respondents affirmed this notion, articulating confidentially as a vital part of their pastoral care within the context of elite sports. Peter Monahan said:

> Players will talk to me in quite a superficial way when there are lots of other people around. They will let me know they want to have a deeper conversation by saying, 'Oh it

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[33] Care for the Family is a UK-based Christian charity that seeks to support families, particularly during difficult periods. Their website offers resources for parenting, couples and bereavement, amongst other topics (Care for the Family, 2021).

would be good to have a cup of coffee with you at some point Rev' and therefore I

always go offsite because then there is no fear that any other playing staff or sport staff

will see us.

Monahan's ability to be discreet, confidential and neutral allowed athletes to trust him and know

that their interactions would not be made known to others in the club. Previous literature

demonstrates that athletes and staff recognize that, unlike discussions with sport science staff,

those with the chaplain are not performance-based (Jones et al., 2020; Roe & Parker, 2016) or

associated with the politics of the institution (Gamble et al., 2013). This detachment provides a

further layer of legitimacy and potential for a relationship where athletic performance is not a

driving factor. This same sentiment was acknowledged by Duncan Murray, who spoke of this

confidential and relational presence being something that challenged professional soccer culture.

Murray explained that confidentiality was not always ensured within an organization, and an

athlete may not be honest with a member of staff for fear of their comments getting back to the

coaching staff and potentially affecting their playing time. In this circumstance, the chaplain's

ability to guarantee confidentiality provided a space in which the honest emotions of the

individual could be respected. Confidentiality was also affirmed by Todd Dempsey in the NFL

who spoke of the importance of providing athletes a safe space to speak and be encouraged in a

sometimes toxic environment. In offering confidential pastoral care, chaplains provide a space

that, according to their responses and the wider literature (Gamble et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2020;

Maranise, 2013; Roe & Parker, 2016), is not normative within the host organizations they serve.

Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, (2008) see confidentially as a best practice for sports chaplains in

line with not seeking favors, such as receiving tickets, merchandise or autographs, that chaplain's

must uphold to maintain their legitimacy. Even though pastoral care was not always explicitly religious in nature, chaplains did not shy away from speaking about their religious beliefs.

In providing pastoral care, chaplains were not afraid to reference their faith either as a starting point or in the hope of having a conversation that engaged with the spiritual. Martinsville Power chaplain George Brown affirmed this when discussing his approach to pastoral care:

> My methodology is a person who loves Jesus. Whether I am a pastor or not, I am going to relationally connect with [another] and when I have a door open to speak about my love for Jesus or encourage them in their love for Jesus that is what I do. I do not initiate, 'hey, will you come to lunch with me and I am going to tell you about Jesus.' I don't initiate that, I wait for a[n] opportunity. And often those come, those come in some random spaces.

This type of response was common, with all chaplains recognizing the importance of their religious witness and desire to discuss spiritual and religious topics. In witnessing to their religious faith within a secular space, chaplains become public theologians. Ballard (2009: 22) sees the chaplains as a "pivotal public theologian" whose witness allows for others to see the beliefs of the individual lived out on a daily basis. Ballard (2009) goes on to say that this witness provides the chaplain a prophetic edge, in which they proclaim the hope of God's transformational power in a specific situation. While Ballard (2009) affirms the prophetic potential of the chaplain, various texts (Ellis, 2014; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010; Linville, 2016; White, 2016) have critiqued the lack of prophetic power in sports chaplaincy, arguing that sports chaplains in elite sports settings are more interested in maintaining their access and ministry than speaking truth to power within elite sports. While chaplains within the

study did not speak to being a prophetic voice within their host organizations they were willing to serve all people in the club, regarding less of their faith background.

When discussing the religious component of pastoral care, chaplains in the study were asked about their pastoral care with people of other faiths or none. Chaplains in the EPL interacted with athletes practicing a faith other than Christianity or not practicing a formal religion on a more frequent basis, and appeared to be more open than NFL chaplains to dialogue regarding another's religious tradition or providing resources so an athlete could practice their religion faithfully. For example, at his previous club, Peter Monahan had helped a Muslim athlete explain Ramadan to his teammates so that they would better understand his religious observance. Lewis Sherwood recalled a humorous interaction in which a Muslim player sought his assistance:

> We've got a Muslim player who I get on really well with. … We had a classic moment … he said, 'I need to learn Arabic properly because I need to know the Koran' and all this stuff. I said 'I've got just the guy in our church.' He's a retired Church of England Vicar, who is a Messianic Jew who speaks fluent Arabic. … So I said 'You probably ought to check this out with your Imam, how he feels about a Messianic Jew teaching you Arabic.' … So I fixed them up. They had a couple of sessions together. But also the mosque, I get hold of the mosque and tied that up.

Sherwood laughed as he told this story, finding the humor in the unique circumstance in which a Christian chaplain connected a Muslim player with an Anglican ordained Messianic Jew so that the player could better practice his faith. While sounding like a punch-line to a pub joke, this interaction demonstrated the ability of the chaplain to listen to the needs of a person within their organization and assist them regardless of their request or religious belief. Previous literature

affirms the chaplain's ability to serve people of all faiths or none, but have not provided specific examples of such practices (Ferrin, 2008; Gamble et al., 2013; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2013c, 2016; Mason, 2006; Roe & Parker, 2016). These findings demonstrate that, while not necessarily occurring in every context, chaplains not only state that they will help all but some are actively supporting players from other religious traditions.

NFL chaplains did not identify as many opportunities to interact with or serve people of other faiths within their organizations. Their responses suggested that there is less outward religious diversity within the NFL, which is affirmed by Krattenmaker (2010) and Kelber (2009) who argue that the normative religious narrative in elite sports in the United States is one of evangelical Christianity. Steve Smith acknowledged that he would struggle to provide counsel outside of a Christian perspective:

> To be honest with you, in past times depending on where it is I will get to a point … [where] I will say, 'Look I have got to be honest with you, I am a one trick pony. I got one trick in this circus and it's Jesus; and if I can't talk to you about Christ and if I can't give you Biblical counsel, to be honest, I really don't have anything for you.' I know that sounds kind of harsh… I have had very few instances like that because usually if a guy is struggling they will go to the player engagement guy or they have different counselors through the organization.

While this demonstrates an awareness of his abilities and expertise, Smith goes against prevailing literature, included US-based sports chaplaincy texts (Ferrin, 2008; Kenney, 2016; Maranise, 2013c, 2016), that encourage chaplains to fully serve all regardless of religious

affiliation. However, other NFL chaplains demonstrated an openness to engaging with a person who did not share their same faith. The Casey Tigers' Anthony Thomas said:

> I think with the non-believer it really is being genuine. Like once again, they know I am the chaplain. So if you coming to me about something it is evident you want spiritual advice. … So now I have to be sensitive of when those pockets and moments come. I just can't be like 'Aight sit down, you a sinner, you going to hell, you got to give your life to Jesus.' Right? No, it ain't going to happen. So when we sit down one of my first questions is, 'Man I would love to hear your story.' Once I hear their story then I can have wisdom on how to connect with them. And so, my approach to pastoral care with the non-believer is just to be sensitive, listen, and be one hundred percent honest in 'sharing the truth in love'.

While Thomas' response demonstrated an altogether more open-handed approach to working relations, Steve Smith recognized that his chaplaincy practices largely hinged upon being able to approach pastoral situations through a Christo-centric viewpoint. In both circumstances, these chaplains showed an awareness of their strengths in engaging with another. Within their given context all respondents recognized the importance of providing pastoral care that was relational, confidential, and sought to assist those within the host organization when in need. Pastoral care was closely tied to the chaplain's ability to respond to the needs of those at their clubs.

5.4 Responding and serving

All chaplains within the study expressed the importance of being present and serving the people in their communities. This language mirrored that of chaplaincy literature that emphasizes the importance of presence in the work of the chaplain (Dunlop, 2017; Holm, 2009; Todd 2018;

Todd et al., 2014). George Brown's entire theology of ministry was based on the power of presence, "I think largely my theology is basically being present as a minister, being there, you know being in it." Being present allowed Brown to foster relationships that had endured over years with staff and athletes at the Martinsville Power, oftentimes continuing after people had left the organization. Duncan Murray articulated how being consistently present meant that explicit evangelism was not the priority in his chaplaincy, "If I went in there trying to convert everybody I would be out after about ten minutes. So it just doesn't work that way. What does work is when you're around consistently you make relationships, you respond to pastoral issues." Roe and Parker (2016), Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) have all highlighted the negative perceptions surrounding evangelism and chaplaincy. This literature suggests that a chaplain's ability to effectively provide pastoral care is hindered when motives such as overt conversion are present, causing people to question the actions and intentions of the chaplain. The importance of presence and the ministry that emanates from this will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter. Alongside presence, chaplains used the language of service to describe their ministry.

Anthony Thomas and his wife, who led a women's Bible Study for spouses and girlfriends of the Casey Tiger's athletes and coaches, based their ministry off of service. He said, "Our philosophy of ministry [is] serving, servant leadership. … We love them, we meet them where they are at and so we have no opinion of their lifestyle. We don't judge them anywhere. If they are willing to show up we are willing to serve them." Thomas' comments affirm the reality that it is challenging to fully serve another while judging who they are or what they do. The concept of service while asking nothing in return was abnormal for the members of Lewis Sherwood's club:

Our primary aim is to serve. So we will even fall over ourselves not to expect them to

give us anything. Which is a countercultural thing. Because they can't understand it. They

go 'Well, why would you do this?' And quite often, guys on the staff say, 'Why do you

come in and not be paid anything? I don't understand that. Why?' I say, 'Because I'm

here to serve you. Because I love you. That's why I'm here. Because I want you to know

that it's not about me trying to take anything.' So I don't expect anything from the club.

In a society and subculture where people always expected to gain something in an interaction,

the service and presence of the chaplain reminded those within the organization that this was not

the motivation behind every relationship or action. Sherwood's emphasis on service and care

mirrors the language used by Waller and Cottom (2016), who argue that shepherding, a metaphor

with Biblical and theological roots focused on service, is at the core of sports chaplaincy. This

imagery conjures of notions of deep care, providing for those in need and knowing 'the flock'

the shepherd is charged with leading. The authors recognize that maintaining this form of

ministry can be challenging, as the chaplain may neglect self-care or experience compassion

fatigue. Nevertheless, they contend that when the sports chaplain prioritizes serving God and

maintains a holistic approach to ministry that honors the self, the image of the shepherd can be

life-giving and help root their ministry in Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. They state that this

notion must be reclaimed by sports chaplains and be seen as a primary part of their ministerial

identity. While not explicitly using the language of shepherding, Sherwood's proclamation of

care to those at the club demonstrated his desire to care for those in his context regardless of the

perceived benefit. Over time, this relational approach based off service provided Sherwood a

unique opportunity to care for those at Wimfield United.

Sherwood's presence and service had built trust, making him a confidant within the club. This position allowed Sherwood to serve the organization in a time of great need:

> I suddenly got a call from [the manager] and he said 'you heard about [a player]?' I said 'No.' He said 'Well, yesterday his girlfriend lost his baby [late in the third trimester of pregnancy].' It was in the press and everything. He said, 'I want you to come in tomorrow before the [the next] game because we're blokes and nobody wants to talk about it. We don't know what to say. *WE* don't know how to cope with it. The lads don't. But I want you to come, and I want you to do a three-minute talk to the squad before the [the next] game. But we need to [be careful], you need to think about it carefully because I want it to motivate them because it's the biggest game in our life as a club.' … I did this thing before the game, got everybody there. You know, an absolute privilege, with [the player] there. Lot of tears, but just acknowledged what we were and how we were to [go forward]; and just everybody embraced and acknowledged it. It's like we put stillbirth, we put death right in the midst of it before the game, and it was just an amazing moment in the changing room with the entire squad. And then we went out and won. … That was a chaplaincy moment that was pretty unique.

Through the mundane moments of being consistently present and serving without asking anything in return opportunities to bring healing became possible. In being present to serve all in the club, the chaplain positions themselves to respond to the needs of those within their organization, responding in a manner that is appropriate within their given context.

5.5 Conclusion

This aim of this chapter has been to identify the role chaplains play within their host organization. Using the work of Newitt (2011) and Pagett and McCormack (2006), the chapter addressed three roles often affiliated with chaplaincy: (i) religious duties typically associated with a minister, (ii) pastoral care skills, and (iii) the ability to respond to and serve the needs of those within their care. Chaplains within the study fulfilled the religious obligations commonly associated with ministers, specifically, leading worship, facilitating Bible study, offering prayer and officiating occasional offices such as weddings or funerals. The religious duties affiliated with the chaplain were central to the work of US-based sports chaplains, often being their primary duty within an organization. While chaplains saw these services as beneficial, they did correspond with criticisms addressed by Linville (2016), who argues that chapel services in elite sport are not always conducive to the spiritual, given the limited time for worship and focus as part motivational speech and sermon. Furthermore, they affirmed the hierarchal structure of elite sport, having Bible studies that were divided by role within the organization. While EPL chaplains did provide these services, except leading worship, they were not as much of a priority to their host organizations. Nevertheless, the chaplain's ability to facilitate services such as the scattering of ashes for a supporter's family were seen as beneficial and a method of extending pastoral care to the entire community affiliated with a club.

EPL chaplains described pastoral care as the focal point of their service, prioritizing this form of engagement and interaction with club members. NFL chaplains also saw pastoral care as a central part of their ministry, but this was paired alongside their religious duties. In both locations, chaplains sought to be present and serve the needs of all within their respective clubs.

This presence was vital to their ministry, and was cultivated by chaplains in both locations. Critics of sports chaplaincy emphasize the evangelical nature of their ministry, caricaturizing sports chaplains as individuals focused on proselytization and leveraging their work with elite athletes for their own gain (see Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010). This assertion is not completely baseless, as the conservative evangelical identity of the majority of sports chaplains in the US lends itself to an outlook that emphasizes the preaching of the Gospel and evangelism, particularly when compared to chaplains who associate with more progressive or mainline denominations. However, this image neglects the caring nature of chaplaincy. Within the study, chaplains seemed more concerned about providing care and support to members of the host organization as opposed to promoting a specific religious narrative.

Overall, chaplains within the study fulfilled comparable roles to chaplains in other sectors. However, two elements emerged that are important for understanding the ministry of the sports chaplain. First, the contextual nature of the chaplain's work within their host organization was important to recognize. Even though sports chaplain's may fulfill comparable roles, their work could not be fully understood without assessing the context they served in. For example, Todd Dempsey and Anthony Thomas both led Bible study for their NFL teams. However, how their host organizations approached chaplaincy meant that the number of studies they led and the people they interacted with made their work markedly different. This will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter. Second, the ethos of the sports chaplain is counter to the prevailing mentality and attitude of elite sports. The desire to serve and care for the individual, regardless of their ability or performance and while seeking nothing in return, made the sports chaplains in the study outliers within their host organizations (see Jones et al., 2020; Stewart, 2021). As a result

of their position, the sports chaplains witnessed to the love and mission of God through their presence and desire to build relationships. This made their work unique within their host organizations. This witness and the vocational call behind it will be discussed further in chapter nine.

Although similar skills and competencies were identified, the context of the host organization was crucial to understanding their ministry as a whole. Specifically, the chaplain's ability to effectively minister and fulfill their role was dependent on the expectations and access of the host organization. As data gathering and analysis occurred, it became apparent that understanding the expectations of the host organization and the access given to chaplains was vital to comprehending the work of the sports chaplain. In the next chapter, we will look at how the expectations and access provided to sports chaplains helped or hindered their ability complete the roles discussed above.

Chapter Six:

Expectations and Access

6.0 Introduction

As previously noted, in his analysis of the roles chaplains fulfill Newitt (2011) utilizes job descriptions of chaplains to understand the skills sought over a variety of contexts. While beneficial to understanding the work of full-time paid chaplains, sports chaplains are rarely in this position, oftentimes serving as volunteers on the margins of an organization. Therefore, the sports chaplain not only needs various skills to minister effectively within their host organization, but also must contend with organizational expectations surrounding their work and access within the organization. Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013), Roe and Parker (2016) and Waller, Dzikus and Harden (2008) suggest that being integrated into a sports organization provides more opportunities for the chaplain to positively affect those within the club; however it is not the chaplain who dictates these parameters.

This chapter analyzes the responses of chaplains in relation to the expectations and access given with their host organizations. The data suggests that even though respondents fulfilled the roles and skills discussed in the previous chapter, sports chaplains' host organizations had few formal expectations for the chaplain; however, they did have informal expectations that required chaplains to be proactive in serving the organization. Regardless of formal or informal expectations, all were dictated by the club and this did not always align with the expectations of the chaplain, causing issues for the individual. The research also demonstrated that access to individuals and facilities within the organizations varied between chaplains, and the more access the chaplain was provided the more expectations from the host organization were present. This access was controlled by club executives or, more often, the manager of the first team.

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Furthermore, access was not a static concept, and required renegotiation during times of leadership transitions within the club. Therefore, this chapter will argue that to understand the role of the sports chaplain in elite sport setting one must not only identify the roles and skills of the chaplain, but also assess the expectations and access provided by the host organization. The chapter concludes by suggesting that chaplains need to delineate their expectations for ministry in the club from organizational expectations or norms, being mindful of any dissonance between the two. It will also suggest that access is not static, but an active aspect of ministry. In this, it is something that chaplains must consistently monitor and mindful of. Finally, the chapter will suggest that, to fully understand the work of the sports chaplain, one must take into account their role, the expectations around their work, and the access they are provided.

6.1 The importance of expectations (or lack thereof)

For the purposes of the present discussion, when analyzing the expectations of the chaplain, the author is referring to the formal, meaning contractual or explicit, or informal, more implicit or assumed, requirements given to the individual by the host organization. Overall, there were few formal requirements from host organizations in relation to the chaplains within this study. Indeed, in both leagues, there were more informal expectations of the chaplain than formal, but these still varied widely. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008: 114) note that expectations are contextual, and that "Chaplains may enter a team environment with certain expectations only to realize the situation is not what they expected." The authors attribute this challenge to a lack of standards and norms regarding job descriptions in the field. In their research into the roles of sports chaplains and sports psychologists in elite soccer clubs, Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013) suggest that the lack of formal integration into a club structure can limit the impact of the

chaplain. While they argue that this is a benefit, as the chaplain is less attached to the power structures of the organization, it is not without its difficulties.

The expectations for NFL chaplains within the study received from their club tended to revolve around the running of chapel before games, with other religious components such as Bible study being informal expectations of the position. This was true for Anthony Thomas, Steve Smith and George Brown, who described his expectations from the Martinsville Power in the following way:

> [The organization] only asks if I can do the chapel the night before or [on] gameday, whenever it gets scheduled. So that is minimum requirement. What the players and the Christian staff [desire], that changes every year. So this year I will lead a Bible Study for couples, I'll end up doing [a Bible study for athletes and] my wife will do a women's Bible study, and then you know I am just available to them [pastorally].

Anthony Thomas, of the Casey Tigers, and Steve Smith, chaplain to the Ely Eagles, affirmed similar expectations, with pre-game chapel being the priority, and Bible study or responding to pastoral care issues being more informal and secondary. These expectations were not written down or presented in terms of a formal contract for the chaplains, and none of the three received a salary or financial compensation for their work from the host organization. However, Smith and Brown did receive tickets to home matches from their respective organizations, and Thomas' tickets were provided by the head coach. Furthermore, as previously discussed, Smith officially travelled with the team to away matches, who covered his transportation, food, and lodging. These forms of compensation appeared normative for chaplains in the NFL. Further discussion

on the implications, or lack thereof, of such forms of compensation on a chaplain's partiality will be discussed later in the chapter.

The only chaplain in the study with any financial stipend or formal contract from their host organization was the Winburg Warriors' Todd Dempsey, and this was still a part-time position he completed alongside his work as an associate pastor at a local church. Dempsey described his formal requirements as follows, "to have a chapel service weekly during season, and to provide a Bible study or some type of connection point for players, also to be available if anyone needs counseling, if anyone needs to be married, if there is a death." Dempsey also articulated the informal requirements connected to his role surrounding being a pastoral presence in a challenging and high-pressure environment. Even though Dempsey described counseling as a requirement of his position, he did not have a degree and was not professionally licensed in the subject. During interviews, comments made by Dempsey around counseling suggested that this was done in a pastoral manner and not as a certified mental health professional. Dempsey's role was more robust and detailed in comparison to other chaplains within the study, yet still featured many of the same expectations. The difference being his were formal, contractual expectations that had the backing of the coach and other senior management, including the general manager and president, of the organization. Dempsey's contract was on a part-time basis, and included financial compensation, as well as travel and accommodation when travelling with the team. He reported directly to the general manager, and the accountability structures around his contract will be discussed in Chapter Eight. Dempsey disclosed that there were theological parameters in his contract:

the only other aspect of the contract [that addresses theology] is not to get into the minors

of faith, but to stick to the majors. You know, so as far as theologically, the gifts of

tongues, the gifts of prophecy, things that are not necessarily 'mainstream' faith [beliefs].

However, theological principles such as] sanctification, justification, things like that, are

where I am supposed to stick.

Asked to clarify what "stick[ing] to the majors" entailed, Dempsey responded:

I can only make guesses but a conjecture could be that if I started teaching about specific

denominational practices such as, it is specifically listed out like speaking in tongues or

healing, etc., it would be confusing and I think more hurtful than necessarily helpful for

guys that did not grow up that way. And so I think they [the organization] see a very

ecumenical approach to be helpful. … I think chaplains are there to help the team, not stir

up any more trouble. They are supposed to help keep it calm and so I think that is one

way.

Dempsey and his host organization recognized how a chaplain can be an asset, but could also

lead to divisions if specific practices were emphasized. In his account of a season embedded with

the Baltimore Ravens, Feinstein (2005) details divisions within the team that revolved around the

chaplain. While the divisions referenced by Feinstein appeared to be based more off personality

and control issues surrounding the chaplain, they were unwanted distractions during the season.

Contractually obliging Dempsey to avoid potentially divisive issues appeared to be the Warriors

way of avoiding similar predicaments.

Alongside his formal and informal requirements as the chaplain, Dempsey was also employed to

assist with the first-year athletes, also known as rookies, orientation program the club ran for

those entering the NFL. A former NFL player himself, Dempsey's role helped support a staff member without NFL experience as rookies began to transition into the league. This additional responsibility was unique amongst chaplains in the study, as no other chaplain had duties outside chaplaincy within a host organization. Furthermore, it appeared unique in the sports chaplaincy literature as a whole, which minimally suggests that US-based chaplains sometimes serve as character coaches, but not assist in the kind of player development Dempsey was hired to complete. According to Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), a para-church organization that supports and trains sports chaplains and campus ministers, character coaches are individuals who help develop athletes or coaches character. Where a sports chaplain may offer faith-based advice, character coaches offer value-based counseling. Furthermore, they suggest that, given the lack of an overt religious/spiritual dimension to their work, meeting with a character coach can be mandated by a coach, but speaking with a sports chaplain must remain optional. This could be taken as a kind of loophole, where an overtly evangelical group, FCA, may not be able to gain access to a sporting environment with a sports chaplains and instead equips and trains character coaches who are supposed to not be faith-based (West Central Georgia FCA, 2021). Waller, Dzikus and Harden (2008) identify how FCA also include character coaches alongside chaplains in those they equip and train. In his article detailing the work of the former New England Patriot's chaplain, Jack Easterby, Wickersham (2015) notes how Easterby was considered both the chaplain and character coach for the organization, even preferring the latter term. While not common, the intertwined use of these terms, sports chaplain and character coach, suggest that there are, most likely, more similarities than differences between the two, and further research into the semantics and work of both is needed. The added responsibility of Dempsey's work provided another layer of access and connection, further strengthening his place within the

structure of the organization. No NFL chaplain interviewed signed a code of practice, stating formal expectations, establishing boundaries or outlining safeguarding procedures, for their work within the organization. Furthermore, there was no governing body or organizing group that helped establish these parameters. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter Eight, which focuses on accountability and safeguarding structures. Chaplains in the Premier League had different emphases and requirements surrounding their roles.

Expectations for EPL chaplains from their host organization tended to revolve around being present for pastoral support. This affirms the incarnational emphasis argued by Linville (2016) and Krattenmaker (2009), who delineate between the incarnational focus of UK based sports chaplaincy and the evangelistic focus of US-based sports chaplaincy. No EPL chaplain in the study had a formal job description, but all were members of SCUK and had signed the SCUK Code of Practice.[34] This code of conduct was signed by the chaplain, a representative from the host organization and a representative of SCUK at the beginning of their tenure at a specific club. The manner in which a club selects a chaplain is dependent on the institution. According to SCUK, best practices suggest that a representative of the club works with SCUK to identify potential candidates and interview them for the position. Once a candidate is selected, they sign the aforenoted Code of Practice and work with the host organization to set various expectations. New chaplains must go through induction and safeguarding training, and are on a probationary period for the first three months in which a member of SCUK checks in with the chaplain and a representative at the host organization to make sure the arrangement is working. Unfortunately,

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[34] A copy of the SCUK Code of Practice is located in appendix six.

the expectations of the organization may be not initially apparent or access may not be granted to fully live out the expectations put forward in the Code of Practice.

Lewis Sherwood was the only chaplain whose club, Wimfield United, had a more specific charter, similar to a code of conduct, for the chaplain's work within the club. Sherwood shared a copy of the 'Chaplaincy Charter', which contained few specifics, such as what dates and times he is expected at the club or who he is to speak with, and focused on more broad brushstrokes regarding pastoral care, such being present and available to those in the organization. The charter did specifically make provisions for support of people of other faiths, something Sherwood demonstrated in an example referenced in the previous chapter. When asked about his work at the club, Sherwood dismissed the need for a structured job description:

> I am a pastoral, spiritual, safety net. … I've never been a fan of the board having a set job description for me … it's been all about relationship for me, and I've tended not to go the more structural route of saying 'this is an agreement of how much even time here.' Because I do about four or five hours a week. I come to training. I came on Tuesday and did about three hours, and then I also meet [with people] out[side] of [that] time. So it's very varied, but it's about five hours a week, and on a match day it's about [an additional] four hours.

Interestingly, Sherwood's remarks suggest that a lack of formal expectations were beneficial, if not preferred. As we shall see, Sherwood had exceptional access and relationships within Wimfield United, and his position within the club may have contributed to his comfort level regarding formal expectations as he felt secure in his position within the organization. Other

chaplains in the EPL provided similar expectations, emphasizing their pastoral and spiritual presence within the club.

Overall, when compared with NFL chaplains, those serving in the EPL did not have as consistent expectations regarding religious duties concerning leading worship or Bible study. All four described spending roughly three to five hours per week at their respective clubs, corresponding to the SCUK's Code of Practice stating that, at minimum, a half day a week was expected from the chaplain. Kinsford City's Duncan Murray, Oakhill FC chaplain Alastair McDaniel and Peter Monahan of Tibsbury Rovers described how their role within the clubs relied on their own initiative and creativity, requiring them to be proactive in relationship building. In this, their work would require some flexibility so that they could respond to situations that came up within their context. This goes against the findings of Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013: 259) whose research suggested that chaplains within their study did not take proactive steps to "promote their services". This proactive and flexible approach was present in NFL chaplain's expectations and descriptions of their work, but not as explicit or emphasized as their EPL counterparts. This could be due to the expectation of leading specific events, such as worship or Bible study, as opposed to the more amorphous task of offering pastoral care. While some chaplains within the study benefitted from clear expectations, others struggled to reconcile their expectations with those of the host organization.

Alastair McDaniel served as the chaplain at Oakhill FC, one of the Premier League's wealthiest and best resourced football clubs. However, McDaniel felt that the size and scope of the organization hindered his work:

So in a small club you go along and say 'you need a chaplain, a chaplain provides pastoral support. [The] chaplain's here for all faiths and none, to be that sort of trusted friend, someone acknowledged and with permission to be there, but not in the system, not on the payroll, so it has a different feel.' And yet, in these super clubs … they're just like 'Why would we have a chaplain?' There are some people that get it, and most just don't even know. And my role is very rarely reactive. It's not like someone saying 'Oh chaplain, can you come in, we need you to do this, this, and this' or 'Yeah, we haven't seen you for ages, where have you been?' sort of thing. I have to sort of make stuff happen and be very proactive.

The lack of pastoral care expectations from the club were hindered, in McDaniel's opinion, by being a part of a large organization that was well staffed and supported financially with numerous different outlets for athletes or other staff to be heard or gain services from caring professionals who complete tasks otherwise associated with the chaplain. While McDaniel had never served a smaller club, he felt that working at an organization that did not have the financial strength of his own club may provide more opportunities for the chaplain, as his services would be in more demand. For example, a club without such a robust pastoral care and player welfare department may utilize the skills of a chaplain more if an athlete needed pastoral support. McDaniel had no evidence that this would be the case, but felt his role was limited due to the club's resources. However, the club did seek him out to facilitate scattering of ashes services. As mentioned in the previous chapter, McDaniel had officiated roughly eighty scattering of ashes services in his first four years at the club. For each of these, the club contacted McDaniel and asked him to work with the family to plan the ceremony. It is interesting to note that McDaniel's said that his role was rarely reactive, with the club reaching out to him; however, this was done

each time a scattering of ashes was requested. In their analysis on the role of sports chaplains within elite collegiate athletics in the US, Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008) contend that the role of the chaplain is not universal, and is contextual to the organization, it's structure, and the desires of those in leadership, specifically the head coach. They argue that the expectation of the sports chaplain may not align with the role provided to them within the structure of the organization, causing a dissonance between the chaplain and the club. In the case of Oakhill FC and McDaniel's service at the club, we find an example of such dissonance. While no one from Oakhill FC was interviewed for this study, their actions, as described by McDaniel, would suggest that they understood the chaplain's role to be one who helped facilitate ritual, in the leading of scattering of ashes, as opposed to a pastoral presence for athletes and coaches.

Nevertheless, McDaniel continued to be present within the organization's training facility, seeking to support those at the organization. He used the word "intentionality" to describe his visits to the Oakhill FC training ground, saying he would often enter saying a prayer such as, "'Lord, what do you want me to be doing? Whilst I'm going to feel really uncomfortable I know there's something; you are going to do stuff.' And I'll be there to pastor anyone who needs it." In this, we see McDaniel almost mirror an athlete before competition, using prayer as a way to prepare and seek assistance in the task ahead (see Czech et al., 2004). While willing to minister to any and all, McDaniel's lack of clarity around his role in the club led him to feel uncomfortable and like an outsider within the organization's structure. He said:

> quite bluntly I [don't] think [the club] care, really. You know, if you are not creating a
> stink, if you're not creating any problems for them then that's brilliant. If you're doing a

bit extra and you're around and they can call on you when they need, brilliant. But after

that, you know, so what?

The lack of pastoral expectations led McDaniel to conclude that chaplaincy was not a high

priority for Oakhill FC. When discussing the circumstances surrounding his situation,

McDaniel's tone and responses suggested there was little he felt he could do to change his

circumstances, even though he did help the club by facilitating scattering of ashes services. As a

result of this, McDaniel's questioned his position and whether he should remain in the role.

While McDaniel's wanted to serve the club, the services he desired to give did not appear to be

expected, or wanted, by the organization. The experience of McDaniel suggests that Waller

Dzikus and Hardin's (2008) observations about expectations of the organization and the chaplain

not aligning have a negative effect on the chaplain. Furthermore, this may disproportionally

affect the chaplain, as opposed to the club, as it is the chaplain who must abide by the

expectations put in place by the host organization.

In the NFL, the Casey Tigers' Anthony Thomas did not have support from club executives, who

gave clear expectations but actively limited his ability to work outside those parameters, as well

as his access to team facilities. Thomas described his predicament by saying, "the highest

[person] in the organization that supports me is the head coach, so no one above the head coach

even get, you know, why I am here." Thomas' experience goes against previous literature

arguing that the head coach or first team manager is the central figure who determines the level

of access and expectation for the chaplain (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; King et

al., 2020; Gamble, Hill & Parker, 2013; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008,

2010). Other chaplains in the study spoke of the manager's approval as crucial to access, even

though it did not benefit Thomas in his context. Thomas was only asked to coordinate chapel each week for the team and lead a Bible study for athletes. Allowed into the training facility each week for Bible study, Thomas inferred that he was not allowed anywhere in the building but the room where Bible study occurred; therefore limiting his interaction with other members of staff and athletes who were not participants in his study. When asked about his interaction with sports science staff, Thomas responded, "I don't see them, I don't know them. They are not there the same time I am that I know of. So yeah, I don't really commune with those guys at all." While he suggested that he was not allowed to interact with other members of staff, Thomas did not state how much effort had been put forth reaching out to those individuals either. Thomas' limited time within the facility meant that interaction with staff was minimal, focusing rather on relationships with athletes and the head coach. In one interview, Thomas suggested that he was not considered a part of the organization by others in the club. Asked whether he would be comfortable suggesting a psychologist or counselor outside the organization for an athlete, Thomas responded that he would be comfortable with this because "they [the organization] don't see me as a part of the team so, it wouldn't matter, not the guys but the organization. So it doesn't matter if I suggest something to the outside." As a result this, Thomas did not feel included in the club's structure. Thomas' response affirms the work of Gamble, Hill and Parker (2013), who argue that chaplains who were not involved within the structure of the organization were perceived as outsiders by those within the club structure. What is unique about Thomas' circumstance is that the head coach, athletes and their families utilized Thomas' services. As previously mentioned, Thomas had numerous Bible study groups that were active and well attended by athletes and their significant others. Even though Thomas did not have expectations that associated him with the support structures of the organization, he was still able to provide

pastoral support to those who desired his assistance. Overall, chaplain's responses demonstrated that expectations, either from the club or themselves, were contextual and dependent on the club's willingness to involve the chaplain within the organization. For all chaplains, it was the host organization who set the parameters around the chaplain's expectations and their ability to engage with members of the organization. The data shows that expectations for the chaplain were closely associated with notions of access within an organizational.

6.2 Access and its dynamic nature

As eluded to in the chapter introduction, access refers to an individual's ability to enter a physical structure, such as a training facility, and engage with individuals or groups within an organization. Access varied between organizations, but was oftentimes determined by the first team manager or the executive leadership. When not supported by the manager or executives, the chaplain's access could be severely curtailed. Both academic texts (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Ferrin, 2008; Gamble et al., Parker, 2013; King et al., 2020; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010) and practitioner accounts (Howard, 2018; Lipe, 2006, 2020; Wood, 2011) affirm the role a manager has on the access of the chaplain. In his monograph detailing his time as a chaplain to a US collegiate basketball team, Howard (2018) observes that all access to the team was controlled by the head coach, while Lipe (2006) uses the title of 'gatekeeper' to describe the coach's ability to give access to the team. Ferrin (2008) and Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008) specifically address the importance of the head coach in the access of the chaplain in North American elite sports. Ferrin's (2008: 58) interviews with NFL chaplains revealed that access differed at each NFL organization, and "the amount of access for each chaplain varie[d] and [was] typically contingent upon either the owner or the head coach".

Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008) argue that the organizational structure of an elite collegiate athletic program is often determined by the head coach, citing FCA training manuals that prioritize the relationship with the head coach as crucial to gaining access to the team. As a result of this, they conclude that a chaplain's position within the organizational structure is contingent on the desires of the head coach. In the UK, Gamble Hill and Parker (2013) provide three categories for managerial response to the role of the chaplain: i) the chaplain is seen as a member of the holistic support structure and the manager was positive about their potential impact; ii) the manager is indifferent to the chaplain and their work, and while the chaplain could go about their work they would not be fully integrated into the club; and iii) the manager actively restricts the role of the chaplain. Regardless of the categories in play, Gamble Hill and Parker demonstrate how the manager's response to chaplaincy can set the tone for the work of the sports chaplain. These sources, from academic and practitioner texts in both geographic locations, demonstrate consensus that the chaplain's access is largely dictated by senior management, specifically the first team head coach.

Chaplains in the study had experienced their access being limited by both upper management and the first-team manager. Anthony Thomas' issues with access hindered his ability to be present within team facilities:

> I am only at the facility once a week and that is for the Bible study. … So every chaplain [host organization] relationship is different. It depends on, you know, the higher echelon of people. Some owners don't want chaplains around, for obvious reasons, I mean they are more spiritual than anything, and so I don't have full access so to speak. I am there

Bible study days, that is one day a week and gamedays. Other than that all the ministry takes places outside the facility.

While Thomas had the support of the Casey Tigers' head coach, others in leadership stepped in to curtail his presence within the facilities and on gameday. Thomas and his wife were given tickets to home games by the head coach but he could not enter the locker room or be on the field, only visiting with players post-game in the space reserved for families. While Anthony Thomas' access was hindered by executives, Duncan Murray had his access curtailed by the first team manager.

Throughout his time as chaplain at Kinsford City, Murray had established a weekly routine of visiting the facility and stadium, where the club's corporate office was located:

Tuesday I will go to the training ground, I will just be around, you know building bridges, making relationships, being available, getting a face known. Wednesday I will go to the stadium, I will do a staff drop in for anybody that wants it, and other than that pastoral one to ones, meetings with relevant people [such as the] education and welfare officer, safeguarding, foundation trust, and of course I go to all the home games. … I would say [I am at the club] about four hours. But again, it all depends how it goes. … So when I started doing the stadium drop in that was quite frequent, to my surprise, but it has gotten quieter lately.

The reason for the downturn in staff visiting with Murray could be attributed to the first team manager's limiting of his access and role within the club. At one point, Murray had enjoyed a strong presence with the Kinsford City Academy (youth team) to the extent that he had been a regular on the players substitute bench during games. Reflecting on how this shift occurred,

Murray recalled how his presence and role with the academy had been noticed by the new first team manager, and his access was curtailed after a conversation between the two. He was no longer allowed on the bench at academy matches and, while not providing specific examples, noticed a general distancing between himself and those he once engaged with at the training grounds and corporate offices. Murray argues that this could be a part of a wider element of football culture, stating:

> The dynamic of football club is incredibly curious. You [have] got to be incredibly sensitive and yet really thick skinned. So for example, I might have a really good relationship with someone and get on really great with them, and then there is a change of manager, he sort of is a little bit standoffish, all the sudden the person you have got a really good relationship with is a little but standoffish as well; because he doesn't want the manager to be thinking, 'I'm pally [friends/have a good relationship] with the Rev, he doesn't like the Rev, so that might mean curtains [difficulties] for me.'

Murray's comments suggest that access is not static but a dynamic and active element of chaplaincy that is renegotiated, at least, each time a shift in management occurs. Furthermore, the manager's desire to incorporate the chaplain into the club is not just a structural change, but has relational implications as well. This demonstrated the far-reaching nature of the manager's influence within the organization. However, the manager who had limited Murray's access was removed during season in which data collection occurred, and, in an interview which took place shortly after the manager's removal, Murray was hopeful that his former level of access would be restored by the new first team manager. Murray reflected on this in our postseason discussion:

> For the last season, basically all that I have done when I go to the training ground is see the security guys, hang around for about five minutes and go away again because there is

not really any context for me to be there. So hopefully that will change. Hopefully, [I can

get on the new manager's] radar and I can even meet him formally or informally. What I

will have to do is explain to him that, you know, I haven't really been around the first

team much for the last season. I don't know what will happen then, we will see, he may

just keep everything as it is.

Even though Murray was hopeful his access would improve after the removal of the previous

manager, the limits he had placed on Murray's access had, in part, remained after his departure.

This suggests that the curtailing of access may affect the chaplain even after the individual

limiting their access departs an organization. While Thomas and Murray struggled to gain access

within their host organizations, not all respondent chaplains experienced such problems.

Steve Smith was given exceptional access within the NFL's Ely Eagles organization, both within

the facility and in relation to traveling with the team, and this was something he did not take for

granted:

So I can go in the locker room, lot of guys can't do that. I can go in the training room, a

lot of guys can't do that. That is kind of a dicey thing because there are injured guys in

there and a lot of times they don't want people around knowing who is doing what, but

for somebody who has an idea of what we do that is a huge place to go because you can

go in an encourage guys. [I can go in] the cafeteria, a lot of guys can't go in the cafeteria.

Our building has two floors, the coach's offices are upstairs, some guys aren't allowed to

go up to the more administrative area. On the road or during the games, some guys can

go to the stadium but they can't go on the field. So I am allowed on the field and I'm

allowed in the locker room. So I am very fortunate in that I have access pretty much to

everywhere, but I kind of know my bounds. I don't go walking into the coach's part [of the building] or the coach's locker room. I just, I don't know, there are just certain things. I don't just hang out in the locker room and chum around with the guys. If I go in there it is for a reason. I will specifically talk to a guy so I just don't go and just kind of hangout, try to be their buddy, try to be their pal. I am not there for that.

Smith's comment sheds further light on the dynamic nature of access, suggesting that it could be changed at any time if he overstepped his welcome or abused his privilege. He understood the access he was provided was not a right and, even though he was a long-standing member of the organization, his behavior could hinder his access if he abused these privileges. This awareness suggests that discernment was required as chaplains monitored their access in ministry, further adding to the dynamic nature of it. In this, monitoring circumstances and acting with purpose were a part of their access and role in the host organization. Smith also discussed how he would seek permission from new coaches to maintain access, always reaching out to them and not assuming that his position remained the same. This behavior not only demonstrated Smith's respect for the new coach, but emphasized the need to renegotiate access when a new coaching staff was installed. Wimfield United's chaplain, Lewis Sherwood, had a similar perspective.

Sherwood claimed, given his conversations with other chaplains and knowledge of norms in the league, to have the best access in the EPL, but recognized that it may not last forever. Mindful of this, Sherwood stated, "we just got to enjoy it for the time being because it may go. It's happened to me in the past … In the English football setting the manager is key to access – the most difficult periods for access was when there was a change of manager who may not know or trust you." Even though Sherwood was close to the Wimfield United first team manager, he

understood how a change in that position could drastically alter his own role. Both Smith and Sherwood recognized that the privileges provided had their limits and were not permanent elements of their ministry. While literature on sports chaplaincy acknowledges the role the head coach and senior management play in allowing the chaplain access, it does not address the dynamic nature of access and the constant monitoring and renegotiating that occurs. Respondents in this study described how access was not a static element and was something they were ever mindful of maintaining or gaining, seeing it as a privilege and not a right.

When considering the access of the chaplain, one must also take into consideration the matchday presence of the sports chaplain and their role within the structure of the team on gameday, as this demonstrates their integration into the organizational structure of the club. Hoffman (2010: 234) suggests that even though sports chaplains may not receive pay for their work, "there often are season tickets and a considerable amount of cachet that comes from being associated with a local professional sports franchise". He goes on to argue that chaplains who accept these types of 'in kind' contributions, and other similar elements such as free merchandise, lose the right to speak truth within the organization. Hoffman (2010: 236) concludes his critique of chaplains accepting these elements in a scathing manner, saying, "sports chaplaincy bears more than a faint resemblance to the role the church played in the post-Constantinian world, where its faithful served, not the cause of the gospel, but the interests of the empire". Hoffman's comments infer two things: (i) that chaplains are willing to forgo pay for the ability to attend sporting events, implying their fandom is a priority, and gain from their association with the team; and (ii) that the chaplain's acceptance of team tickets or merchandise, and their inclusion in the function of the team makes serving the organization's goals the priority over witnessing to the gospel. As

discussed in the second chapter, Hoffman's argument is not substantiated with evidence to support his claims, and while he does recognize the benefits chaplains can have, this is a cursory remark that features minimally in his analysis. For the purposes of this chapter, we will focus on the first critique of chaplains, seeking to gain from their matchday benefits.

All chaplains within the study attended the team's home matches, with all but one being provided tickets by the club. NFL chaplains Todd Dempsey and Steve Smith prayed with the team before and after games, and this allowed them access to the field and locker room during both home and away games. As previously mentioned, both Dempsey and Smith regularly travelled with their respective teams to away matches. Both chaplains assisted the team during these games, running various scouting papers and images between coaches, to help justify their position in the team's travelling squad. Martinsville Power chaplain George Brown had access to the tunnel area pre-game so he could interact with athletes and coaches, but had no formal role in pre or post game activities, sitting in the stands during the contest. He would, at times, travel to away games, but had to pay his own way. However, while travelling the team would cover his hotel room and provide two tickets to the game, which was standard for any away game guest preacher working with this particular organization. Anthony Thomas, of the Casey Tigers, would speak to players post-game, but did not have any credentials providing him on field or locker room access. While all four NFL chaplains had some form of presence during home games, matchday presence was less a factor for chaplains within the Premier League.

Three of the four EPL chaplains did not have contact with athletes or coaches on matchday but still attended home games on a consistent basis. Peter Monahan used matchdays an avenue for pastoral care with family members of players:

> They gave me a season ticket last year … I think I went to nine games [out of 24 home matches] last year. … My season ticket is in amongst the player's friends and families so I kind of go as much as anything to meet friends and families as to watch the game. And I found out if I go every other game, maybe one in three, that is enough for me to just keep track of uncle so and so, [and see if] mom and dad are over here. [This] just gives me that kind of slightly wider network into people's lives.

Monahan's intentional emphasis on engaging with family members demonstrated his ability to create further relational ties to the players and their family support structures, leveraging his gameday access to support this group of people associated with the club. His priority on pastoral care while at matches, and his comfort in missing matches, suggests that being present to view the match was not the priority, as is inferred by Hoffman. Only one Premier League chaplain had contact with players and coaches on matchday, and that was Wimfield United's Lewis Sherwood.

Sherwood's emphasis on relational and pastoral presence extended to his matchday routine:

> I wear a dog collar, to explain who I am, just I'm a vicar-person and I wander around. I go and see stewards, I go and see the match day staff. Just say hi to them, 'how you doing?' Keeping people encouraged. And I don't always hang around after the game. Mainly because after the game it's not my place to be there. With the players I'm operating a bit more, you know, 'hope it goes well today' you know, I don't interrupt

their workday. It's their work day. It's a bit like before a game, before a service. … My

one moment is this prayer thing.

Sherwood not only attended the majority of home matches, but was involved in the pre-game

routine through a brief time of prayer for the first team. As discussed in the previous chapter, this

was a set element in the team's pre-match routine that was attended by the manager and various

athletes. Similar to Monahan, Sherwood also used his time and access on matchday to be a

pastoral presence for those in the club. The researcher was able to observe this during a visit to a

Wimfield United home match, and a write up of this can be found in Appendix three.

Sherwood's access and responsibilities on matchday were unique amongst all research

participants, as he was the only chaplain in either league with that amount of personal contact

with the manager pre-match. During field observation, it was obvious that Sherwood had

leveraged his access on matchday to further connections with those in the team and staff, as a

result of this, create opportunities to support all on match days. As mentioned in the writeup,

Sherwood did not have a security badge to gain access to the tunnel, a privilege only afforded to

the first team athletes, coaches and staff. This demonstrated the position he had within the

organization and the trust that had been placed in him. It was clear that Sherwood's focus on

match day was the care of those within the organization. One way this was shown was his

admission that he often does not stay for the entire match, considering his work done after the

game was underway. Similar to Monahan, this suggests that the pastoral access that comes with a

match ticket was the priority over the ability to view the match. This would also challenge

Hoffman's (2010) critique that sports chaplains complete their work as a way of gaining tickets

or other in-kind contributions. While Sherwood typically did not go into the tunnel post-match,

he did so during my field observation. His recognition that his presence wasn't beneficial during this time is another example of discernment in access. Similar to Steve Smith, Sherwood understood that just because he had access didn't mean that it was appropriate for him to be present. These examples demonstrate the active nature of access, which requires constant discernment. Overall, chaplains used their match tickets and access as opportunities to serve members of the organization and their families, prioritizing pastoral care over viewing the match.

6.3 Conclusion

Although chaplains within this study identified the same skills and competencies described by Newitt (2011) and Pagett and McCormack (2006), assessing the different expectations and access was crucial in understanding the chaplain's role within their respective organizations. The data collected demonstrated that sports chaplains had few formal expectations surrounding their work, but had numerous informal expectations that connected them with members of their club. These expectations often took the form of leading religious services or Bible study and/or providing pastoral care. However, the data also revealed that there was, at times, tension between the organization's expectations for the chaplain and the desired expectations of the individual. Highlighting the expectations of Oakhill FC, which appeared to see the chaplain as a valuable asset in coordinating scattering of ashes services, and the desired expectations of Alastair McDaniel, who desired the opportunity to provide pastoral care and build caring relationships. This dissonance affirmed Waller, Dzikus and Hardin's (2008) warnings around chaplains being unhappy in organizational structures when expectations are not clear. Going forward, chaplains should seek to gain clear expectations from the outset, seeking to delineate between their desired expectations and the imposed expectations of the host organization. In this, chaplains need to be

willing to accept the role provided by the host organization as their priority. This does not mean that chaplain's cannot wish for expanded or different expectations, rather it recognizes that the host's desires will always be primary in chaplaincy. Furthermore, chaplains should acknowledge that the host organization's expectations may change when a shift in senior leadership, be it at the executive or managerial level, occurs. These shifts in expectations may also affect access.

Chaplain's responses also showed that the more expectations associated with their role from the organization, the more access they tended to have. Access is not a static concept, but is an ever moving and dynamic dimension of the sports chaplain's work. Chaplains articulated the privilege that came with access, but also recognized that managers or senior executives could remove this at any time. In particular, access was renegotiated at times of leadership change. For example, Duncan Murray's access was curtailed when Kinsford City got a new first team manager. This renegotiation not only affected his ability to access facilities, but also had reverberations regarding relationships with staff and others in the organization who distanced themselves from him after the manager showed his disapproval. Those who did have, what they considered, good access still needed to discern how they used their access and its implications on their ministry. The notion of access as an active concept that requires discernment and renegotiation should be incorporated into sports chaplaincy training and literature, helping chaplains identify the effect their actions can have on access and encouraging them to be ever mindful of this topic. Chaplains are encouraged to reflect on their access and the manner in which this access was negotiated, the boundaries around it and how it can be positively leveraged to benefit their ministry.

Pairing the roles that sports chaplains fulfill with an awareness of expectations and access helps gain a more complete picture of how chaplains within an elite sport setting function. These three elements, roles, expectations and access, can be analyzed and discussed separately, but all must be taken into account when assessing the work of the sports chaplain. To neglect one area is to miss part of their ministry and the elements that effect it. Regardless of the roles the chaplains fulfilled or whether they were provided with formal expectations and access within their club, chaplains were primarily marginal figures within their host organizations. This marginalization had an effect on how the chaplains performed their duties and perceived their roles. As we will see in the next chapter, the chaplain's marginality was a challenge but also provided opportunities to minister and support those within the host organization.

Chapter Seven:

The Liminality of the Sports Chaplain

7.0 Introduction

As previous chapters have demonstrated, the roles and expectations of the sports chaplain are, overall, marginal within the wider working of their host organizations. Pattison (2015) contends that chaplaincy per se is an inherently marginal field given that, in general, chaplains are not vital to the central task of the organization which they serve. The role of the sports chaplain affirms this notion, as their purpose is not essential to the athlete's preparation for on-field duty or to assist in the running of the organization to ensure long-term prosperity and viability. Pattison (2015) suggests that, whilst often perceived as a detriment or shortcoming, this sense of marginality may be viewed in a positive light by chaplains because it allows them to move and work more freely in organizational contexts. The concept of marginality is addressed by Turner (1969) in his analysis of liminality in African tribal rituals. Turner's (1969) focus on this concept utilizes the work of Van Gennep (1909/1960), who first introduced the concept of liminality in his theory on rites of passage in society and argues that such rites have three stages: (i) separation (preliminal), (ii) transition rite (liminal), and (iii) incorporation (postliminal). Turner (1969) contends that liminality is a role 'betwixt and between' stages and allows for a person or a community to oscillate between communitas and structure, the two poles of society in Turner's framework. No society, according to Turner, is permanently at either pole, with groups oscillating between structure, which is hierarchical and ordered, and communitas, being a state of relational equality. Furthermore, he contends that a person or group can be a permanently liminal figure, aiding their society or group in the shift between these two poles.

At one level, this chapter will serve as a bridge between the previous two chapters and the next

chapter, on accountability and formal evaluation structures for the chaplain. As a result of this,

various elements, such as discussing specific roles, or lack thereof, and perceptions around

accountability structures will be addressed. In doing so, the details of specific roles or evaluation

structures will not be assessed, rather, these elements will be placed into a wider context of the

chaplain's liminality within their host organization. It is the author's contention within this

chapter that Turner's description of liminal figures provides a framework via which we might

better understanding the location and role of the chaplain within elite sports settings.[35]

Furthermore, the work of Pattison (2015) demonstrates how the marginality felt by respondents

can be seen in a positive light. As we have seen in chapter five, chaplains within the study

affirmed the marginal and liminal nature of their role through descriptions of their status within

their host organization, the ambiguous nature of their roles and a lack of formal accountability.

They also articulated circumstances in which their liminality was a benefit, allowing them to aid

and support those within their club settings. Using Turner's work as a foundation, this chapter

argues that the sports chaplain is a liminal figure who can bring about communitas in a setting

defined by structure. The chapter begins by addressing the arguments of Van Gennep

(1909/1960) and Turner (1969) in relation to rites of passage, liminality and their function within

a society. This necessitates an understanding of Turner's concepts of communitas and structure.

Special attention is also given to Pattison's (2015) work on the rise of chaplaincy in modern UK

society and how marginality plays a crucial role in this. Transitioning to the data, the chapter

demonstrates how chaplains have the same characteristics as liminal entities. In their role, the

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[35] In this chapter, marginality refers to someone that is on the periphery of a specific group or entity. As a result of this status, the marginal being is not central to the task or goals of the larger group or body. Liminality is defined as an ambiguous state in which the individual is not put in a set position within an entity. For example, the head of sports science at an EPL club is not a liminal entity as their role is clearly defined and fixed within the organization.

chaplains in the study affirmed Pattison's (2015) notions regarding the benefit of marginality and Turner's (1969) argument that the liminal figure is capable of bringing about communitas to a structured entity. The chapter concludes by suggesting that emphasizing the liminal nature of chaplaincy allows the individual to better embrace and understand their marginality.

7.1 *Rites of Passage*

French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep produced the first theoretical framework for assessing and analyzing rituals in terms of their structure, frequency and importance for times of transition. Van Gennep observed that, while the specific ritual in each setting is unique, their form and importance are consistent across contexts. His work has been widely used in to assess rituals and times of transition in a variety of academic disciplines.[36] In his seminal work, entitled *Rites of Passage,* Van Gennep (1909/1960) argues there are three stages to any rite. First, the person or group undergoing the ritual experiences a rite of separation (pre-liminal rite). This removes the one undergoing the rite from their previous social state or norm. The rite then enters a transitional (liminal) phase. This second state is one of ambiguity, where those undergoing the ritual have separated from one entity but are not yet included in the next. After the subject has passed through the transitory phase the process concludes with the rite of incorporation (post-liminal). This final phase comprises the subject joining, or rejoining, the society, having undergone some form of transformational process. While all three phases are important within a ritual, Van Gennep states that not all stages are developed equally or emphasized in the same

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[36] For example, Van Gennep's framework has been used to understand the transition rituals used in primary school to help students shift between grades and schools (McCadden, 1997), and to discuss health care workers from Sweden serving humanitarian crises (Albuquerque, Eriksson, & Alvesson, 2018).

way in every social context. For example, funerals emphasize rites of separation while weddings tend to focus on rites of incorporation.

Van Gennep's work has been used to understand the work of the chaplain. VanKatwyk (2005: xviii) references Van Gennep when discussing the work of hospital chaplains, using the term "ritual coordinator" to emphasize how the chaplain's pastoral counseling is distinctive within the hospital context. VanKatwyk (2005: xviii) argues that, for hospital chaplains, the three stages of Van Gennep's model are seen within the context of the chaplain-patient interaction as "these three stages of transition define the human condition as encountered in institutional care and are core metaphors for pastoral counselling". While VanKatwyk describes the importance of all three stages, Van Gennep's second subsection, the liminal phase, is the most important for the present study and has been elaborated on by Turner (1969), who demonstrates how liminality is present within societal structures.

7.2 Liminality and communitas

Building off the work of Van Gennep, Victor Turner, a British cultural anthropologist, highlighted the manner in which rites of passage can affect or provide social change. Turner's work suggests that rites of passage are not only important in the life of an individual or a society, but offer new possibilities for those undergoing the ritual that were not previously available. Turner's (1969) research analyzes tribal rituals in Africa and addresses all three elements of Van Gennep's framework, focusing particularly on the second phase. He argues that the liminality of a specific rite can be associated with an individual or specific entity. He expands this notion, writing:

The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ('threshold people') are necessarily

ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of

classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities

are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and

arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. (Turner, 1969, p. 95, original

italics)

Turner broadens the understanding of liminality to incorporate entities that are outside of a

specific rite, seeing the concept as an element of a functioning society. This entity could be an

individual, festival, event, specific space or other agreed upon occurrence or context. For Turner,

liminality provides the connection between the two poles of society, communitas and structure.

According to Turner, communitas is a relational state of equality, where there is a removal of

hierarchy that allows individuals from different groups in the society, be it social, political or

another type of differentiation, to be equal. He uses the example of a tribal chief's installation to

demonstrate a period of communitas. In the rite described, those of a lower societal status are

allowed to approach the chief-to-be and acknowledge any previous wrongdoing or hardship

while the chief-to-be cannot respond and lies motionless on the ground. This type of equality

would not be acceptable outside of this ritual, as it would violate the structure of the group.

Turner states that structure, the other pole of society in his framework, is notoriously hierarchal,

separating people between socio-economic, political or other classifications. Structure within a

society not only defines individuals by these categories, deeming them more or less important

than their counterparts, but also sets norms and standards which help provide order and

organization to the group. Turner argues that no society is purely one or the other, but rather that societies must oscillate between communitas and structure to remain functioning and healthy.

Turner contends that communitas is present where structure is not. For this to occur those involved need to enter a liminal state. This liminality leading to communitas allows for spontaneous and relational encounters to occur between people. One would not expect equality and transformation to arise during routine interactions between groups in a structured society; however, the ambiguity and liminality of specific people or events allows the status quo to be transformed, even if only for a brief period. Bain-Selbo (2012) and Bain-Selbo and Sapp (2016) argue that communitas can be seen in the rituals surrounding sporting events. Using a religious lens to understand Southern college American football, Bain-Selbo (2012) contend that elite collegiate American football is a form of civil religion in the Southern USA. His work is primarily theoretical and does not use empirical evidence to support his claims. Bain-Selbo (2012) state that Turner's (1969) notions of communitas are present in the ritual of American football in the American South. He contends that the events and activities that occur on game day allow for a relational equality that would not be possible in the normative structures of a given society as fans of a specific team can address one another as equals, regardless of social status or societal role they embody, due to their sporting allegiance. In this, the game and events surrounding it serve as the liminal space which brings about communitas for those present. The implications of liminality on practical theology have been addressed by Carson et al. (2021), arguing that through the liminal space individual Christians and church communities can engage with the Spirit and grow. The work is the first publication to investigate the role of liminality in theology. In doing so, it recognizes the benefits of this terminology and engaging with this space

in the life of faith. However, it does not address the role of the chaplain as a conveyor of communitas.

Even though communitas is temporal, Turner (1969: 107) sees liminality as a lasting condition for specific groups or people, arguing that "what was in tribal society principally a set of transitional qualities 'betwixt and between' defined states of culture and society has become itself an institutionalized state". Identifying different liminal groups, such as "small nations, court jesters, holy mendicants, good Samaritans, millenarian movements" (Turner, 1969, p. 125) amongst others, Turner recognizes the broad nature and diversity of those in permanent liminality by identifying key traits. While differing in context, "all have this common characteristic: they are persons or principles that (i) fall in the interstices of social structure, (ii) are on its margins, or (iii) occupy its lowest rungs" (Turner, 1969, p. 125). While these characteristics may not be the most desirable in a structured group, Turner argues that it is the marginal person, who the wider society deems insignificant, that can shift a community to a place of equality.

Inhabiting the margins of a structured society allows for one who is marginal and liminal to bring about communitas. It is important to note that while communitas is present where structure is absent, it is only permanent for the liminal entity. Be it in scheduled and organized rites or through the presence of liminal entities, society has ways of going between these two poles to function. Once society moves back toward the pole of structure, a liminal person remains on the margins. In this regard, the liminal entity must recognize when it is necessary to bring about

communitas and when it is necessary to recede back to the edges of society. Turner's argument surrounding the benefits of marginality correspond with the work of Pattison (2015).

Setting out to understand the place of chaplaincy in present-day UK, Pattison (2015) notes that the rise of chaplaincy corresponds, loosely, to the decline of traditional church denominations in terms of authority and social acceptability. He uses the example of the Church of England's opposition to the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act of 2013, as an instance in which the ecclesiastical body was not in line with the wider society's acceptance of an issue. For Pattison, this example, amongst others, demonstrates the distancing between the church and the general public. While the church has struggled to identify with the population, chaplaincy, according to Pattison, has flourished. Asking why this has occurred, Pattison highlights three elements of chaplaincy that have made it a more socially acceptable embodiment of religion. First, he contends that the chaplain's ambiguity and distance from traditional religious organizations have allowed it to embody and be welcoming of various values that modern society deems sacred or sacralities. Pattison argues that the Church of England's position against same-sex marriage and ordination of women went against what others in society deem sacred, in this instance initiatives that promoted equality for minority groups. This is juxtaposed with chaplaincy, which has been seen as welcoming and non-judgmental as "it embraces sacralites such as equality and diversity, with concomitant commitments to non-proselytisation and working with people of all faiths and none" (Pattison, 2015: 21). As a result of this, Pattison (2015: 22) contends that chaplaincy's ability to honor the subjective nature of human experience has helped it become the "acceptable face of religion" in the UK.

Second, he argues that chaplains are inherently marginal within host organizations and the ecclesiastical body that supports them. In regards to their host organization, Pattison contends that chaplains are marginal because they do not have the same goals or focus as the institution. As stated in this chapter's introduction, sports chaplains do not share the same goals as coaches, athletes or others in their host organization as their focus is not the on-field success of the team. Within their ecclesiastical bodies, chaplains experience marginalization by embracing sacrilities that are often deemed unacceptable by the denomination. Pattison (2015: 23) notes that many chaplains bemoan this, but he contends, "it may be that marginality is one of the real strengths of chaplaincy". This strength is derived from the chaplain's perceived lack of power or influence as a guest within their host organization. As a result of this, their presence is non-threatening. Pattison concludes his observations by suggesting that chaplains are able to work in ways others are not because there is a vagueness surrounding their role that prioritizes process over results. This, alongside the willingness of chaplains to deal with the challenges of life others may seek to avoid, provides a level of mystery to the chaplains work which is tolerated, according to Pattison, as long as they do not hinder the work of the host organization. For Pattison (2015), chaplaincy has become an acceptable face of religion because it thrives as a marginal presence which seeks to support people of all faiths and none in a manner that is otherwise antithetical in an organization. As a result of this, Pattison sees the liminal, ambiguous and marginal nature of chaplaincy as some of its greatest strengths. Pattison's work is foundational in understanding the marginality of chaplaincy, as a whole, and will be used throughout the chapter to assess the marginality of the respondents. While Pattison does not cite Turner or Van Gennep, his assertion on the marginality of chaplains is in line with their theories. Transitioning back to Turner's emphasis on ambiguity and his three commonalties of liminal entities, fall into the interstices of a

social structure, marginality and being on the lowest rung of the organization, we now turn to the chaplains' understandings of their own marginality and liminality.

7.3 The ambiguity of the chaplain

As we have seen, the liminal person's role is inherently ambiguous, as they do not fit into the structures that classify people within a society. For the chaplains in the study, this ambiguity was demonstrated through the lack of specific responsibilities in their position or flexibility in meeting those expectations addressed in the previous two chapters. Whereas the specific roles and expectations of the chaplains within this study have been addressed in the previous chapters, this section focuses on how chaplain's perceived their roles as ambiguous and non-descript within their respective host organizations. Numerous chaplains within the study were not bothered by the ambiguous nature of their role and saw, to use the language of Pattison (2015), this vagueness in their role as a benefit. For example, the absence of a formal job description demonstrated the ambiguity of Tibsbury Rovers chaplain Peter Monahan:

> like many chaplains I kind of developed [the role] after my own fashion. So I don't have any formal contract. It is very adhoc. … I would say my role involves kind of a degree of intentional listening, so trying to listen to some of the underlying themes that might be in the conversations that are going on.

A lack of formal description provided to the ambiguity of Monahan's role; however, Monahan appeared to be comfortable with this, particularly as it allowed him to prioritize listening. This focus required him to respond to what was occurring at the club, rather than simply meeting specific goals and standards around being present for a set time each week. In the NFL, George Brown also dealt with a level of ambiguity in his role.

As previously mentioned, Brown led worship and Bible study for the Martinsville Power but adjusted his approach and the content covered each season depending on who was present and what they desired. Even with these expectations in place, Brown's role was still informal and non-specific. He said, "no one has written job description for the [club] chaplain. No one. It is just an informal, not very defined role. Basically if you asked people in the organization [they will] probably [say], 'Oh they just do chapel and they hang out.'" Brown's reflection on this subject not only affirms the informal nature of his role, but that the ambiguity of his role extended to how those in the club understood his position; as Brown disclosed that many in the organization did not understand his work. This opaqueness is affirmed by Pattison (2015) who argues that the symbolic presence of the chaplain is enhanced when there is a level of mystery around their work.

Wimfield United chaplain Lewis Sherwood preferred ambiguity, intentionally not creating a job description with specific requirements. While not desiring a job description, Sherwood adhered to the SCUK Code of Conduct as well as an agreed upon 'Chaplaincy Charter' between himself and the club, that emphasized specific themes, such as listening and presence. The language in both the SCUK Code of Conduct and his charter were broad and provided ambiguity in relation to how Sherwood functioned on a daily basis within the club. Monahan, Brown and Sherwood all leveraged their ambiguity to identify what needs were present and respond to instances where they could be of service. In this, ambiguity allowed these chaplains to prioritize the relational aspect of their role, engaging with those present in an intentional manner that was not predicated on fulfilling specific tasks or duties.

The ambiguous nature of liminality can be seen within sports chaplaincy through the broad and inexact responsibilities of the role. Even for chaplains with specific responsibilities these can either change, do not encapsulate their entire work or are present due to their own initiative. This ambiguity is not necessarily negative, as it provides the chaplain with the freedom to respond to the needs of those who are present in the club structure and modify their presence or response depending upon the circumstance. Just as the work of the sports chaplains is ambiguous, their roles closely align with Turner's (1969) three characteristics of liminal people within a club as they fall in between various social structures of their organization, are located on the margins and occupy the lowest level of the organizations social structure. Each characteristic will be assessed in relation to how it corresponds to the chaplain's responses.

7.4 Chaplains fall in the interstices of social structure

Chaplains described their position as either 'informal' or 'honorary' in nature. Due to this, the majority of chaplains did not have formal expectations and did not receive financial compensation for their work. As a consequence, respondents articulated how they can be overlooked by those within the structure of the club. Kinsford City chaplain Duncan Murray affirmed this notion:

> I think that what happens is it is very, very easy to get forgotten about. I think that probably most people are assuming that somebody else is kind of, you know, working with me. Whereas the reality is that the person you assume is working with me doesn't exist, so I think there is always room for improvement. … It can be really frustrating at times, because [of] the culture in football. I remember going to the training

grounds for a meeting with one of the coaching staff. I am standing watching them train, waiting for the training session to finish, I am soaked to the skin, and the training session finishes and the coach looks over and you can see the cogs go round and he is thinking, 'Oh no, I was supposed to have a meeting with the Rev but I can't do that now. So I don't want to go over and say I am really sorry but I can't make our meeting because that will make me feel awkward so I'll just ignore him.' [Laughs] That's common.

Murray's response emphasizes the challenge of being an informal and ambiguous individual within an elite sports setting as he was ignored and avoided by an organization member. This type of behavior would, most likely, not be acceptable from the coach toward another member of the organization. In sharing this anecdote, it appears that Murray did not approach the coach or interact with him, even if they did not have the scheduled meeting. While this may have been strategic, not wanting to make the individual feel uncomfortable, one wonders if an opportunity was missed in the lack of proactive engagement shown by Murray? If Murray had spoken with the coach, even briefly, he could have rescheduled the meeting or, at the very least, continued to develop their relationship further. Not only did Murray recognize he was overlooked by people within the club when they do not remember meetings, but there was a general lack of oversight from the club regarding his role. This included not having a direct report within the club. Falling through the cracks, for Murray, also included being overlooked in relation to responsibilities traditionally associated with chaplaincy.

All EPL chaplains discussed leading the scattering of ashes services for their host organization. This is a common responsibility of the chaplain in English professional football, but Murray had not completed one for many years:

At the minute, for some reason, [the club] tend to not join up the dots. They get

somebody saying, 'We want to scatter ashes.' [For] some bizarre reason they don't think

to say, 'Actually would you like our chaplain to do that for you?' […] What should

happen is, if they get a phone call saying, 'We would like to have our ashes scattered at

the ground' […] What they should do is say, 'Yes, of course. Would you like our club

chaplain to be involved in that?' But they don't do that for some bizarre reason. I have no

idea why they just say to the people, 'Yeah, come and do it.'

Even though this activity would be traditionally overseen by the chaplain, the organization at

Kinsford City had not involved Murray in the rite. This omission goes against the work of

Pattison (2015), who suggests that one of the strengths of the chaplain is to address issues, such

as death, that others in the organization may not be as comfortable with. As a result of this,

Murray felt frustrated and overlooked by the organization. While Murray was unaware of why

the club did not offer his services for this ritual, it did not appear that he had asked them for a

clarification regarding this. Similar to the previous examples, his inactivity in addressing this

issue with the organization may have hindered his ability to serve. While the club may not have

changed their approach to the scattering of ashes services, offering his services and seeking a

reason regarding why he was not being utilized may have led to a circumstance in which the club

did incorporate him into this ritual. In both examples, Murray's lack of proactive interaction with

members of the host organization may have been missed opportunities to foster different

relationships and opportunities to minister. Other chaplains provided similar reflections on

feeling as though they had fallen through the structures of the club when discussing the lack of

accountability and oversight from the host organization regarding their work, specifically in

terms of formal evaluation.

When asked about the club's assessment of their work, chaplains in both leagues consistently spoke of a lack of formal evaluation from their host organizations. Before going further, it is necessary to delineate between accountability and formal evaluation structures. Accountability is understood as a broad sense of oversight, which is both formal, such as through structured evaluations, and informal, in terms of brief check-ins and other relational forms of support. Accountability can be identified but also perceived. In this regard, chaplains may sense a lack of accountability when there is a lack of engagement regarding their work from the host organization. On the other hand, formal evaluation structures are specific appraisal mechanisms and processes utilized by the host organization or sending body. While a type of accountability, its formalized nature does not lend itself to things such as check-ins or other social forms of oversight. Although the specific elements around the chaplains' accountability and formal evaluation will be discussed at length in the next chapter, it is important to address how the lack of evaluation and, in some cases, accountability was perceived by chaplains. When asked who oversees his work within the club, Ely Eagles chaplain Steve Smith said that he did not have any specific oversight from the club. He elaborated on this by stating that the organization:

> know that I provide chapel for the guys on the night before the game, and then we have a coaches and players Bible study but nobody monitors it, nobody oversees it. I am sure in the past some guys have kept an eye on me to make sure I handle myself appropriately. But once the guys realize [what he is doing] and have a comfort level with me nobody even pays any attention to me that I know of.

According to Smith, as long as minimum requirements appeared to be met, there was little interest in review or evaluation shown by the Eagles. Smith's comments reflect Pattison's (2015:

26) observation that "as long as chaplains do not obstruct the main aims of the organisation and are occasionally specifically helpful, they will be welcome". Smith's fulfillment of the Eagles' specific need, in terms of facilitating chapel and Bible study, and did not hinder their football operations meant that he was left to his own devices. This corresponds with the benefits of ambiguity, where the chaplain is allowed a level of freedom not provided to others because of the opaqueness of their position and the minimal requirements present. However, it is also is a challenge as the lack of engagement from the organization's viewpoint brings up questions around the organization's interest in chaplaincy. This void around monitoring and evaluation was a sign to some chaplains, particularly those in the UK, that their work was misunderstood or not valued by their host organization.

Indeed, for Oakhill FC chaplain Alastair McDaniel such oversight came from a lack of understanding of chaplaincy. He wrote in an email:

> Accountability in this role is difficult to describe. Essentially, I don't think the club know what they need a chaplain for, especially in the new world of being a global aspirational football club. Therefore, because the role is voluntary (not paid), and it is categorised with the 'external contractors' no one really needs to own or oversee the position.

McDaniel did not elaborate on the term 'external contractors' but his use of the term suggests a person who is not a normative figure within the club. McDaniel's comments parallel those of Duncan Murray regarding a lack of oversight from the club when no one is assigned the task. In both cases, chaplains felt as if they fell through the accountability structures of their respective clubs. Similar to Duncan Murray, a lack of proactivity in establishing a line of accountability within the host organization was present. It is important to note that neither chaplain discussed

their efforts to seek accountability, even when given the opportunity to speak in the interviews about accountability desired. Pattison (2015) does not address a chaplain's self-advocacy within a host organization, however, he does argue that if chaplains face more stringent methods of evaluation and scrutiny they might lose their ambiguity within the organization. Herein lies a tension point: not enough accountability or evaluation is perceived as negative, but too much scrutiny may limit the effectiveness of their ministry. Further research and writing on how chaplains can effectively self-advocate within host organizations, and how sending bodies can and do help in this, would be beneficial.

Two chaplains in particular, Todd Dempsey (NFL) and Peter Monahan (EPL) were proactive in their attempts to improve accountability from their respective organizations, with little success. Todd Dempsey produced a 'year in review' self-evaluation that was given to the Winburg Warriors, which included responses to a survey he sent to athletes who had been involved in worship and Bible study throughout the season. Dempsey noted that the purpose of the survey was to assess how different elements of ministry, such as Bible study, had been received by participants, and those who responded consented to his use of the material in his evaluation. Dempsey shared his personal appraisal and survey feedback with the general manager of his team at his end of season review, but stated that the manager briefly glanced at it before changing the subject and he did not know if the general manager ever read the report. While different than an evaluation initiated by the host organization, Dempsey's willingness to survey participants, create a document reviewing his work and share this with the organization demonstrated a desire to engage in some form of evaluation. However, it appears that this was not mutual, as his direct report never spoke to him about the document or initiate a different form

of evaluation. Similar, to Dempsey, Peter Monahan had sought more accountability and evaluation from Tibsbury Rovers staff, but had not received the desired response from the organization. He saw such a lack of evaluation as a signal that the club failed to value chaplaincy:

> I don't think they have a sense of an evaluation or a review in that sense. That would be a frustration on my end really. … I think if they evaluate your work there is some sense of value to it. Whether they evaluate it positively or not, at least they are giving some value to it. Whereas at the moment it feels like, I see some value because I see players sharing things, I see people discovering things about God. So I see personally some value but it doesn't always feel like the club necessarily values it.

Monahan's remarks demonstrate how being overlooked by the host organization can feel as if the work of the chaplain is not appreciated. In this, the chaplain's perception around accountability and value increased their feeling of falling through the cracks of the organization. Whether or not this was true within the organization, their perception of the circumstance shaped their understanding. For both Dempsey and Monahan, their efforts to increase evaluation and accountability were not rewarded. Curiously, these two organizations involved Dempsey and Monahan in their support structures more than almost any other host organizations in the study. While no one from either organization was interviewed in this study, it is telling that these clubs did not seek to address this desire and does leave questions regarding how they perceived and valued chaplaincy.

Overall, it was difficult to assess who was at fault for the lack of evaluation. In the case of Murray, Smith or McDaniel, the chaplain themselves could have done more to seek evaluation

and accountability from their host organization. However, for chaplains such as Dempsey, who created his own evaluation, and Monahan, who requested it frequently from the organization without a positive response, more could have been done by their respective clubs to assess their work and integrate the chaplains' desire for feedback into the wider evaluation mechanisms utilized within their organizations. Regardless, a lack of accountability or formal evaluation were ways in which chaplains felt that their work fell through the cracks of the organization. This was one example of how chaplain's felt marginalized.

7.5 Chaplains on the margins

Five of the eight chaplains within the study articulated the feeling that they were consistently marginalized by their host clubs. Alastair McDaniel and Steve Smith explained their marginalization as a consequence of the size of the organizations which they served. Both clubs had support structures that addressed a wide range of areas and this left the chaplains, in their opinion, as marginalized and underutilized members of the organization. Smith commented:

> for the most part they know I exist but I am totally out of sight, out of mind. They just kind of trust that I am doing the right things and leave me on my own and there is no consideration for me that I know of from the club's perspective. … If a guy gets arrested at one in the morning [and] they throw him in jail, the organization doesn't call me. If they hear of a couple that there has been some abuse or there is some tension in the relationship, they don't call me. They have specialists on hand, they have a sports psychologist, they have a motivational coach, they have counselors that they send people to so I don't think the organization looks at me [as someone who would assist in these circumstances].

While Smith felt he could contribute in these circumstances, the club did not utilize his services when these issues occurred. This was similar to McDaniel's context at Oakhill FC, who had tried to demonstrate his benefit to the club, although they did not take him up on this offer, "I don't get referrals and I don't know whether that's because the club don't think about it, it's too big, they don't see the chaplaincy as important; I never really got down to the bottom of them using the chaplaincy as a pastoral support." The experiences of McDaniel and Smith add a new layer to Pattison's (2015) contention that chaplains are marginalized figures within their host organizations because they do not have the same focus or goals as those within the organization. Pattison's work does not address redundancy in terms of the chaplain's focus and others at the host organization. For both McDaniel and Smith, the size and scope of the organization meant that the pastoral care they offered was also offered by others in the structure of the institution. As a result of this, they were on the margins of their clubs.

In describing African tribal initiation rites, Turner (1967: 99-100) argues that "between instructors and neophytes there is often complete authority and complete submission … The authority of the elders is absolute, because it represents the absolute, the axiomatic values of society in which are expressed the 'common good' and the common interest". While the context is markedly different, in an elite sport setting the manager is seen as a figure of supreme authority, whereas chaplains identify with the liminal figures of the neophytes. The importance of the first team manager or other senior leadership within the organization's role in determining the access of the chaplain was addressed in the previous chapter; however, it is also a crucial element in the chaplain's marginality. At times, chaplain's within the study identified their marginality through their access and ability to engage with members of the organization.

Chaplains in both leagues recognized the importance of the manager in determining how marginal their presence was within the club, particularly during a time of managerial and staffing changes. Peter Monahan served under five different managers in seven seasons at Tibsbury Rovers, with a new manager being appointed at the beginning of the season when interviews occurred. The manager was not from the UK and, according to Monahan, had no previous experience of chaplaincy. During our first interview, he spoke about the uncertainty felt during a managerial shift:

> for the chaplain [the changing of managers] has a knock on in that every time there is a new manager I am going in and thinking, 'Well OK do they still want this kind of service? What sort of access are they going to give me? Are they going to be helpful or a hindrance?' So I am still trying to work that out with [the new manager], he's got a Scottish assistant … who seems to have some experience with chaplaincy … and I think a positive view of it. So that could change access, they are the people who could change your access.

Even though Monahan was an established presence within his club, he recognized that his access could change with the appointment of a new manager who didn't desire a chaplain.

Chaplains who did not feel marginalized were quick to point out how fortunate they were and the extent to which they recognized that their access and status within their clubs could easily be withdrawn. Todd Dempsey had witnessed how chaplains were treated as an athlete and through dialogue with chaplaincy colleagues. Reflecting on his own access in light of these experiences, he said that he was "dumbfounded" by how fortunate he was regarding his access within the

club. Dempsey not only fulfilled the pastoral roles asked of a chaplain, but was trusted and welcomed by various executives and coaches, therefore providing him better access. Dempsey's terminology suggested that being utilized and trusted within the club is atypical for the chaplain within an elite sports setting. As previously mentioned, Lewis Sherwood believed he had the best access in the Premier League but recognized it could disappear at any moment. The recognition that access is either atypical or could be removed quickly further emphasizes the marginality of the chaplain, as these privileges are not normative or protected within the structure of the organization. In both instances, Dempsey and Sherwood credited senior leadership in the club for their ability to be present, demonstrating the authority of these individual's within an elite sports organization.

The submission of the chaplain to the manager and their staff combined with the minimal responsibilities given to the chaplain emphasizes the marginality of the role. These elements affirmed Pattison's (2015) argument that the marginality of the chaplain is perceived, by the chaplain as a negative. Indeed, respondents did not see marginality as a benefit, but rather as a challenging factor in their job. The lack of formal structure in the position combined with their marginality placed the chaplain at the bottom rung of a club's structure.

7.6 'The least of these': chaplains occupying the lowest rung of the club

The voluntary and ambiguous nature of the chaplain's work means that they often occupy the lower rungs of their organization. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008: 115) suggest that a lack of clear standards and training make it so "there does not seem to be any clear place where a chaplain fits in the organizational structure of a team". While the chaplain's access and ability to

engage with members of the organization would suggest they have some form of influence, their lack of perceived power or authority put them in a subordinate position (see Pattison, 2015). Duncan Murray affirmed this when describing how the historical precedent of his role did not provide additional support or benefit within the club:

> The position is honoree and, particularly in my case, it's historic as well. So I've been [at Kingsford City for] twelve years this Christmas and the guy before me was thirty-three years; so it's largely what I make it. It's not like the club are saying, '[Duncan] can you do this, this, and this?' Because if I left it to them they wouldn't ask me to do anything properly. Because it's just not on their radar, it is just not really on their radar. … If I didn't turn up for a year a few people would say, 'We haven't seen the Rev lately, is he alright?' But you know by and large it would go unnoticed. And if I stopped doing it tomorrow there wouldn't be crying because it's not something that's on their radar.

Murray's comments emphasized the perceived low position and lack of power chaplaincy held at his host club, despite the fact that it had been present over a long period of time. The challenges of the structural positioning of the chaplain was emphasized by Casey Tigers chaplain Anthony Thomas, particularly in relation to the level of respect and welcome provided by members of the club structure:

> for most of us chaplains we feel like we are on the outside looking in. You know there are only a handful of chaplains who have full access with the support from ownership now. There is only a handful. So when you [are] that one that does not [have that support] you kind of feel like you are on the outside looking in. So you [are] really walking around with your head down trying to influence as many lives as possible and get out of there. So your mindset is different, you know, only a handful of people in their organization feel

like you are a part of the family while the other half don't. … [People at the club] look at you, 'What are you doing here? How can I help you?' When you just got a text from the head coach saying come on down and you got people walking past you asking what are you doing here.

Even though Thomas had the support of his head coach, in his view, he did not feel respected or welcomed by those within the formal structure of the organization, demonstrating his perceived position on the structural ladder of the institution. Thomas' comment has an edge to it that may reveal the lack of power he perceived. Thomas states that individuals in the organization questioned his authority or purpose to be in the team's facilities before interjecting that the head coach, one of the most powerful people in the organization, has invited him in. This statement suggests that while other's did not see him as someone with the authority to be in a specific location, Thomas sought to assert his own authority by emphasizing the head coach's approval of his ministry. While managerial influence is still crucial to the position of the chaplain, Thomas demonstrates how this does not guarantee acceptance and access. Neither Murray or Duncan could demonstrate specifically where they were on the hierarchical structure of their host organizations. Nevertheless, the difficulties described allowed them to perceive that they were low in position. This noticeably affected both men's approach to ministry and the value, they believed, their organization put on chaplaincy.

In these three elements of the liminal figure we see the sports chaplain as a marginal entity who occupies a subordinate position within the structure of their host organization and can fall through the interstices of an elite sports club. Turner (1969) notes that the passivity of the liminal person within a ritual reshapes the individual and prepares them for their position in a structured

society. Due to this reshaping, the liminal figures new role requires a recognition of their circumstances and awareness of the role they inhabit. This is no different for the sports chaplain.

7.7 The profile of the chaplain

Due to their marginal and liminal position, chaplains in both leagues spoke of the need to keep a low profile and be aware of the circumstances they found themselves in. George Brown saw this as essential to his work at the Martinsville Power:

> I just say take what you are given but don't demand anything. So you kind of fly below the radar. …I don't want to give the organization any reason to say I am in the way. … I would rather them [people in higher positions of authority] go, 'Oh my gosh! I didn't even know [George] was here!' I would rather them do that then saying, 'Oh [George] is making a presence.' I want to be made known to the players but not as much to the staff, to the football operations, to the coaches, I don't want to become a part of the conversation.

Brown's desire to not be the subject of conversation amongst those higher in the structure of the organization emphasizes the benefits of marginality within this context. As previously mentioned, Pattison (2015) argues that chaplains are welcome as long as they do not impede the work and goals of the host organization. Brown embodied this as he sought to avoid potential problems associated with being a disturbance to those who are classified as important, as his presence could be deemed unnecessary if he caused issues within the club.

An essential part of maintaining a low profile for chaplains was being situationally aware and not abusing their role. Steve Smith and Lewis Sherwood both had good access in their clubs, but

understood the limits to this privilege. As previously mentioned, Smith described various places in the training facility he would not enter because he recognized that this would cause him to cross a boundary regarding where he was welcome. Smith did not elaborate on how these boundaries were set, but suggested that his presence within these spaces would be seen as either unwanted or abnormal by those who worked there. Smith's extensive experience and understanding regarding how the club functions helped him build this awareness. Smith travelled with the team to away games and this awareness was also present while on these trips:

> On the road I sit on bus four, which is the staff bus. I don't sit on the player's bus or the coaches' bus. Could I? Maybe, but that is something that could be problematic and it is not worth the risk, I don't need to do that. You know on the plane I can walk around wherever but usually I don't walk up to first class where all the coaches are. I don't spend a lot of time paling around with the players. Sometimes I will talk to some of them, if they strike up a conversation with me, so again it is just kind of over time you kind of learn the limits. … You would think that is all common sense, but it is amazing how some [other chaplains] just don't get that and they cross those lines and that creates problems with the coaching staff because to them you don't get it and you are kind of where you don't need to be.

For Smith, knowing the implicit boundaries around where he was welcome helped maintain his position and access. Smith's comments regarding issues with the coaching staff align with Feinstein's (2005) account of the Baltimore Ravens and the negative consequences for the chaplain of various circumstances in which the head coach had to mediate a conflict involving the chaplain. Lewis Sherwood made similar observations that focused on interactions with those at the club rather than spatial awareness. He said that engaging with members of the club was:

a responsive thing, like any chaplaincy there are some days you come in and you know [things are] just very much on the edge. I might go out and watch them, but I don't talk to any of them. […] So, I think it's very, very reactionary to where people are at. Sometimes you feel on the edge of it, sometimes you are part of it.

This quotation affirms the transient nature of the liminal entity in Turner's (1969) work. Sherwood's movement from the margins to the interior of the organization was fluid, requiring him to be aware of this position to continue to minister effectively. Smith and Sherwood provide specific examples of how boundaries and situational awareness benefits the ministry of the sports chaplain (see Maranaise, 2016) and helps maintain a low profile within their respective clubs. This reflection on the liminality of the chaplain within an elite sports setting appears to portray a dim reality for those who volunteer for this position. However, much like the liminality described by Turner (1969), the sports chaplain can use their position to convey communitas in a place of structure.

7.8 The sports chaplain as a conveyor of communitas

Turner (1969) speaks of the power of the symbolic figure who, be it in literature, folklore, or other mediums, has a lesser position within the structure of a society as compared to the main characters of a story, but still conveys deep wisdom and insight within a specific situation. He sees their role as vital because they are the ones who convey communitas to the closed entity that is a structured society. This same notion can be applied to the chaplain within an elite sports setting. Throughout data collection, chaplains told stories of how they were present for members of the club when in need, providing pastoral care and relational support, bringing communitas to the structure of the host organization. These moments of communitas need to be differentiated

from regular elements of pastoral care provided by the chaplain. The majority of support and care provided by a chaplain will, most likely, not involve different groups within the structure of the organization becoming equals. For example, a conversation between the chaplain and a player about the upcoming birth of the athlete's child and the emotions surrounding this event does not modify the structure of the club. However, pastoral care is often an important element in the conveying of communitas. In the study, respondents spoke of bringing about communitas in the following categories: i) time of bereavement, ii) time of tension within the club, and iii) a relationship of equality with the manager. To demonstrate this, an example of each will be provided.

Chaplains in both leagues described how opportunities for communitas occurred during times of death and loss, with numerous chaplains being sought out after a member of the club had lost a family member. In this situation, some chaplains were asked to speak to the individuals effected. Steve Smith spoke of the team having numerous deaths of staff and athlete family members during the season and his role in the grieving process. Smith had attended two funerals as a representative of the organization, one in the same state where the club is located and another on the opposite side of the country. The team had paid for his airfare across the country to attend the funeral, and Smith returned home on a private jet the team chartered so the player who had suffered the loss could be at practice the day after the ceremony. While Smith spoke of his marginality within the club, this example demonstrated a circumstance where the club sought him out and financially supported him when his expertise was needed.

In our final interview, Peter Monahan described how he had been consulted regarding player issues during the season. There was tension between some of the players and club executives, and Monahan was sought out by the latter as a mediator because they trusted him and knew that the players did as well. When asked about the evolution of his role that lead to this opportunity Monahan responded:

> I am definitely seen as this kind of neutral, slightly un-pigeonhole or un-placeable person. So I have very unusual access to the first team but also, I guess because I am that much older and in my life I work at quite a senior level, I'm also quite happy to be with the kind of senior directors and I can be the same in both those settings. So I guess it is partly the length of time I've been there it's partly that kind of neutral role.

Monahan's ambiguity provided him the space and opportunity to be a relational bridge between the opposing parties, allowing him to act as advocate and meditator between two powerful groups within Tibsbury Rovers. Within his club, being a marginal presence that did not have a set job description allowed Monahan to convey communitas amidst heightened tensions.

Throughout the interview process Lewis Sherwood spoke of his close relationship with the manager of Wimfield United. Both men were long term members of the organization and had fostered a close relationship. While the manager was not a Christian, Sherwood prayed with him and a small group of athletes regularly before matches, a rarity in the EPL. However, contact between the two was not limited to matchday. Throughout the season, Sherwood would meet weekly with the manager to go over a leadership book that contained Bible passages. Both agreed that they were still growing as leaders and could grow together. Sherwood described the meetings as such:

So I come in [at] seven [and] do half an hour, forty-five minutes with [the manager]. And I talk about family, talk about life, talk about anything but football because I, can say 'I don't have a clue about tactics' and I would *never dream* [italicized words emphasized by Sherwood] of saying that [I do], 'but let's talk about life.' And we love it. So it's a real closeness, which is an absolute privilege.

Sherwood and his manager's relationship was a strong example of the power of communitas and liminality, where one of the highest and most powerful members of the structured group sits down with someone who is seen as inferior and marginal to engage with one another as equals and learn together.

Just as Turner (1969) describes the movement between communitas and structure, George Brown spoke of knowing when to return to his low position after being more visible in the club. During his tenure at the Martinsville Power, Brown has been called upon twice to deal with sudden deaths of family members of individuals within the organization. In both instances his presence was requested by people in higher positions within the club. Brown noted that this was not a permanent state and that he would need to go back to laying low within the organization, "I think sometimes it is easy for me to know that when I am done. … I know when it is over and all that." Liminal entities can bring about communitas in a structured society, but this is not permanent and as the society swings back to structure they recede back into the margins of society, awaiting another opportunity to provide the relational equality characterized by their role.

These examples show how the chaplain, as a liminal presence, brings communitas to the structure of an elite sport club. This validates the position of the chaplain within the structure of the team, even if this marginal position is not always seen as beneficial by chaplains. The ability of the chaplain to leverage their marginality for good affirms Pattison's (2015) claim that the marginality of the chaplain is a benefit in allowing them to be present in circumstances otherwise not possible if their role was more central to the host organization. Even though being a liminal presence is difficult, there is benefit in the chaplain's ability to be present and convey a sense of community that goes beyond the hierarchical structure within an elite sport setting.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the sports chaplain is a liminal presence within the structured society of an elite sports club. Turner's (1969) argument surrounding the ambiguity of the liminal *personae* is supported through role of the chaplains interviewed, particularly in the informal and changing nature of their position. Comparable to other liminal entities, the chaplains in this study can fall through the cracks of the social structures of the club. This was most acutely demonstrated through a lack of intentionality by members of the club and a lack of formal evaluation and assessment initiated by the organization. Chaplains demonstrated their marginality within the club, specifically identifying the influence of the manager in determining their access and welcome within the organization. Finally, the combination of the chaplain's ambiguity, ability to fall through the interstices of the club, and marginality left chaplains feeling that they were at the bottom of the organizational ladder. Due to their positioning they could be overlooked or made to feel unwanted by members of the host institution. While their position

could seem challenging due to these elements, their liminal role allowed for the chaplain to be the conveyor of communitas within the society of the club.

Even though chaplains did not convey marginality as a benefit, their experiences of bringing about communitas affirms Pattison's (2015) argument that marginality is one of the great strengths of the chaplain. As liminal *personae,* chaplains are able to bring about communitas to a closed group in a way that others in the structure of the club cannot provide, offering relational and pastoral support to all. This position is one of strength and allows the chaplain to live out their missional witness. While Pattison (2015) is correct that the marginal position of the chaplain is a strength, his use of the term 'marginal' hinders his argument. Indeed, articulating feelings of marginalization is rarely, if ever, a positive; however, if chaplains can see their work as liminal, in which marginality is one unavoidable facet, they can begin to reshape and reimagine their position within their host organization. While marginality will be still be present, it is not the central focus or frustration. Rather, prioritizing the benefits of liminality and communitas allow the chaplain to feel empowered and understand why their role will always be, in some form, on the margins of an elite sports setting. Another avenue for understanding the missional witness of the chaplain, as it relates to liminality and *communitas*, is to consider the notion of the *missio Trinitatis* and the chaplain's role as a liminal entity. Kirk (1999) states that the *missio Dei* actually refers to the *missio Trinitatis*, referring to the trinitarian understanding of the Christian God. Kirk's assertion can provide further theological reflection for chaplains, specifically in seeking to understand the relational and equal nature of the Trinity, and how this equality can be seen in moments of *communitas.* While an important element to acknowledge, further theological thought and reflection on the subject would be beneficial.

One element highlighted in this chapter was the lack of accountability from host organizations perceived by chaplains. In the following chapter, the accountability and evaluation structures of the respondents will be assessed. As we will see, the current accountability and evaluation structures, or lack thereof, are an area of which is in need of growth and attention within the field of sports chaplaincy.

Chapter Eight:

Accountability

8.0 Introduction

As previously demonstrated, sports chaplains are marginal figures within their host organization and have few formal expectations from that institution. This marginality and lack of expectations also affects the accountability of the sports chaplain. In the previous chapter, accountability and evaluation were defined and differentiated from one another.[37] The data reveals that chaplains had few formal lines of accountability or evaluation within their host organizations, and external accountability or evaluation was dependent on church or para-church organization affiliations and the chaplain's own initiative. Furthermore, chaplains did not have consistent formal evaluation from their host organizations or sending bodies, lacked personal evaluation mechanisms, were not included in organization safeguarding policy training, and lacked clear requirements regarding professional development. The chapter argues that for sports chaplaincy to reach its full potential, professionally and missionally, accountability and evaluation must be consistent and present for all who work in the field.

The chapter begins by reviewing literature pertaining to accountability and the chaplain. It then addresses four different categories found in participant responses relating to the subject: i) the chaplain's sense of being held accountable, ii) formal evaluations of the chaplain's work, iii) safeguarding standards and training, and iv) professional development. The responses of chaplains are supported by interviews with leaders in para-church organizations specializing in

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[37] As previously stated, accountability is understood as a broad sense of oversight, which is both formal, such as through structured evaluations, and informal, in terms of brief check-ins and other relational forms of support. Formal evaluation structures are specific appraisal mechanisms and processes utilized by the host organization or sending body. While a type of accountability, its formalized nature does not lend itself to things such as conversational or unscheduled forms of oversight.

sports chaplaincy. Thomas Powell serves on the staff of SCUK, an organization that trains, supports, and serves chaplains in a wide range of professional and amateur sports in the United Kingdom and Ireland. SCUK's goal is "to initiate, nurture, support and resource high quality Sports chaplaincy to the community of sport" (Sports Chaplaincy United Kingdom, 2016). While the organization does work with Christian communities engaging in sport, their primary focus is equipping chaplains. Angelo Davis is on staff at AIA in the US and works with sports chaplains affiliated with professional teams. Powell and Davis' responses suggest that para-church organizations are working to provide accountability and professional development, but recognize that host organizations could be more involved in this.[38] The chapter concludes by suggesting that for sports chaplaincy to reach its missional and professional potential further measures of accountability, evaluation and training should be enacted by host institutions and professional sporting leagues.

8.1 Accountability and chaplaincy

In his introductory text on pastoral care, Patton (2005) identifies accountability, alongside attitude, ability and authority as the four elements of pastoral identity. He argues that all four elements are crucial in the formation and continuing life of the Christian minister. Paget and McCormack (2006) identify five types of accountability for the chaplain: i) institutional, ii) ecclesiastical, iii) professional, iv) legal, and v) ethical. They see accountability not only as a way of maintaining the standards of practice for the chaplain, but also a safeguarding measure. Paget and McCormack's notions of institutional and ecclesiastical accountability relate to standards and practices of the host institution and the ecclesiastical body that has sponsored the

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[38] Pseudonyms are used for both men.

chaplain. This demonstrates how chaplains are always accountable to multiple organizations or groups. The various entities the chaplain is responsible to is emphasized by Sedgwick (2015), who, in his chapter on the ethical considerations of chaplaincy within Swift et al. (2015), argues that chaplaincy is different than parish ministry due to the ethical demands placed on the chaplain by the various institutions they serve. This provides a challenge, as the chaplain must navigate the professional, secular and bureaucratic world of their host while also meeting the ethical demands of their faith tradition. He suggests that chaplains maintain their religious identity by embodying their beliefs through the acts of worship and ritual. Sedgwick's argument is theoretical and lacking empirical support, but is still beneficial. However, one glaring omission is that he does not discuss accountability structures that assist the chaplain in maintaining ethical standards. For chaplaincy to continue to be effective, structures must be put in place that uphold the ethical integrity of the chaplain.

Other chaplaincy literature focuses on the need for accountability as the field continues to become more professionalized (Slater, 2015). Writing in the same volume as Sedgwick (2015), Swift (2015) assesses health care chaplaincy in the UK and how it has been studied over time. Even though Swift (2015:172) sees developments in NHS policy, specifically new guidelines released in 2015, as positive, he recognizes that there is still work to be done to create "legitimate accountability". While Swift does not elaborate on this concept, his terminology suggests that current models of accountability are, in some way, illegitimate and further work is needed to professionalize the field. One possible way to improve this is through supervision. Paterson (2015: 149) argues that pastoral supervision "can play an invaluable role in enabling chaplains to inhabit and embrace their liminality as a vocational locus of grace". He contends

that supervision is not personal counseling or spiritual direction, but rather emphasizes the goal of improving quality of care and other skills associated with chaplaincy. In this, supervision has a role in keeping the chaplain accountable and helping the chaplain think missionally about their work. The missional dimension of accountability has also been addressed by others.

In their report to the Church of England on the denomination's involvement in chaplaincy, Todd et al. (2014) identify the missiological implications of accountability. They recommended that the evaluation and development of the chaplain within diocesanal ministries be a priority. This suggests that adding elements of accountability to the work of the chaplain would help integrate chaplaincy into the dioceses and support the missional foundation of the ministry. If the chaplain is sent to serve and witness to God's love, missional accountability focuses on discerning how the chaplain makes known the presence of God within a specific context. This notion is also affirmed by Todd (2018) and Slater (2012, 2015), affirming the continuing need to address the missional work of the chaplain in accountability. Chaplaincy done well is both professional and missional, not one or the other. Todd et al.'s (2014) recommendations also suggest that accountability provides connection, as chaplains who are a part of accountability measures are more integrated into the ecclesiastical body. In the literature on chaplaincy, accountability is seen as an aid to the chaplain by setting standards of best practice, supporting the chaplain in their professional work, aiding in professional growth and grounding their work in the chaplain's Christian witness.

Little academic work has been carried out on the accountability of the sports chaplaincy or the evaluation structures used to assess their work. In their study on the training and affiliation of

collegiate sports chaplains in the US, Waller, Dzikus and Hardin's (2010) research demonstrates the lack of professional chaplaincy training and certification amongst sports chaplains, and calls for further accountability in the field. Their research showed the majority of their respondents, 55 chaplains who completed at least part of their questionnaire, had some form of theological training but lacked chaplaincy and counseling specific training. Furthermore, they were not assessed or evaluated regarding their competency in practical elements of ministry. This research and other publications associated with these authors (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Waller Dzikus, Hardin & Bemiller, 2016) have called for a governing body to credential and certify sports chaplains. This entity would provide appropriate training and accountability for sports chaplains, aiding them in their work. These publications argue that increased focus on accountability and training would help improve the quality of chaplaincy and give the field more professional credibility. A credentialing agency could also provide avenues for reflection on the missional nature of sports chaplaincy, and its relevance in the field. The emphasis on properly training those involved in sports chaplaincy is also identified by Connor (2003) who argues that the better training one receives the more effective ministry will be. One notion not discussed within the aforementioned texts is how a credentialing agency could help facilitate safeguarding measures and training for the sports chaplain.

Oliver and Parker's (2019) research focused on the role of the chaplain within the safeguarding and welfare structures of first and second tier English professional football clubs. Their work highlighted safeguarding concerns with youth footballers, identifying issues with bullying and performance related anxiety issues, amongst others. To provide context, they detail the landscape of safeguarding in the UK. Oliver and Parker state that issues around safeguarding and

corresponding protocols have increased in the 21st century. While issues of sexual abuse, either current or historic, have been notable, safeguarding in sport also refers to issues around bully, discrimination and pressure related to training and performance, amongst other elements. Safeguarding protocols are meant to help maintain the safety and dignity of all involved at a club, either as player, coach, or other personnel, including the chaplain. Collecting data through interviews with safeguarding and welfare officers at numerous EPL and EFL Championship clubs, Oliver and Parker's findings suggests that the sports chaplain can be a positive presence in the holistic support of an athlete. In terms of safeguarding, respondents found the work of the chaplain to be beneficial, specifically in regards to being a positive role model for academy athletes and a resource for athlete's to discuss their personal lives. The work of Oliver and Parker (2019) aligns with King et al. (2020) and Roe and Parker (2016) as these studies detail the positive role sports chaplains played within the holistic support network of an elite football club. While a beneficial presence within the support structures of a club, Oliver and Parker also demonstrated that chaplains were not a part of the safeguarding structures within their host organization. This leaves the chaplain susceptible to accusations or not understanding the proper structures for reporting abuse. Oliver and Parker call for further research and work to be done on the subject.

Literature on safeguarding for sports chaplains in North America is almost non-existent. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008) briefly address suicide prevention as a benefit of sport chaplaincy training, but do not elaborate on other elements related to safeguarding. The lack of scholarship, emphasis and training on safeguarding for US-based sports chaplains is more problematic amidst the backdrop of the aforementioned Baylor University football scandal in which Baylor

administrators and employees associated with the football program, including the chaplain, did not act on allegations of rape and sexual assault relating to university football players. This event exposed numerous problematic practices at the University, one being the lack of appropriate response reporting by the sports chaplain involved. While only one incident, the involvement of a sports chaplain in the Baylor University sexual abuse scandal combined with the lack of scholarship suggest that more research and training is needed regarding safeguarding measures for sports chaplains in the US.

Literature on accountability within chaplaincy emphasizes the importance of this concept for the professional and missional potential of the field. Current accountability structures are seen as insufficient and the lack of formal evaluation structures, professional development and safeguarding training in the US needs to be addressed to help professionalize the field. This lack of accountability may also have an isolating effect on the chaplain, as they are not included in organizational or ecclesiastical accountability structures. Furthermore, it leaves the chaplain at risk of accusation or wrongdoing in problematic circumstances. Literature on accountability of the sports chaplain is limited, raising further concerns surrounding accountability structures for those in the field. These issues were present in the views of respondent chaplains.

8.2 Chaplain's understanding of accountability

When discussing accountability, respondents delineated between support given from host organizations and sending bodies, with the latter being associated with para-church organizations, home parishes or denominations. Half of the chaplains referenced specific people they would communicate with as a 'touchpoint' or direct report within their clubs, but this was

often informal. Peter Monahan met twice a year with his Head of Sports Science at Tibsbury Rovers, but this was largely informal and at his own insistence. He said, "You know I have an informal evaluation from [the head of sports science], but it's very informal and tends to be me going, 'Come on, it's been another six months. What's working and what's not working?' … it is very loose." While there was structure in terms of who Monahan reported to and roughly how often, he still deemed this accountability to be informal. Duncan Murray also sought out accountability from Kinsford City with little success:

> I am constantly trying to say, 'Look we want to be accountable.' So the human resources person, the safeguarding officer, the operational manager at the academy, you know as many people as will listen, I tell them what we do. So if something goes wrong we are accountable. But actually getting the penny to drop is a different matter. … In terms of accountability it's almost like I have to tell people at the club.

While Monahan and Murray desired accountability from their host organization, the clubs seemed less interested in providing a formal evaluation. This was also the case for Todd Dempsey.

Given his status as a part-time employee of the Winburg Warriors, Todd Dempsey had a clear direct report; however, this still did not include more structured parameters around accountability or evaluation. Dempsey described a semi-formal accountability structure:

> my direct report is the general manager of the team and so he is the one that oversees [chaplaincy]. Now as far as to the extent, I don't know what he really requires of me. He met with me once in the fall and once in the spring to say, 'Hey, how things going?' And it really wasn't about me at all. So as far as feedback or oversight I am sure he is

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watching everything I do; he has been to a couple of Bible studies, been to a chapel, so he has an idea of what I do.

Even though Dempsey was a paid employee his role still lacked a formal accountability process, with the evaluation of his chaplaincy focusing very little on his work within the organization. Dempsey's experience suggests that the employment of a chaplain, even if part-time, by an organization does not equate to structured accountability and formal evaluation. Respondent's experiences regarding accountability from their sending body, be it a church or para-church organization, mirrored that of host organizations, with accountability being dependent on para-church organization or ecclesiastical affiliation.

All chaplains were associated with either a para-church organization, parish church or ecclesiastical body. Three of four NFL chaplains had some affiliation, be it formal or informal, with AIA. While there was no formal accountability from the host organization for Steve Smith or Anthony Thomas, both men were on-staff at AIA in their professional ministries division, which focuses specifically on ministering to professional athletes. As previously discussed, AIA is a para-church ministry that is a subset of Campus Crusade for Christ, that works with sports teams, primarily at the university and professional level. AIA staff may work in a ministry team or individual, as Smith and Anthony Thomas did. Due to this, Smith stated that his accountability came through reports sent to AIA. In discussing accountability, Smith said he completed monthly self-reported evaluations, which will be discussed in the next section, was in contact with the head of pro ministry chaplaincy on a monthly basis and attended a yearly retreat/conference with others in his specific ministry field. This retreat was for AIA affiliated NFL chaplains, and would focus on a different area of ministry each season. For example, during

the season when interviews took place, a guest speaker from the NFL spoke on suicide

prevention and other mental health initiatives the league was prioritizing. Furthermore, he was

required to uphold the Cru Statement of Faith, as are all staff at AIA, which can be found in

Appendix seven. While beneficial, Smith said there were still difficulties present in maintaining

consistent accountability:

> [AIA has a] structure, there is accountability, but it is just a little looser because we are
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> all on our own …. We [AIA] have done a lot better job [in recent years] of really working
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> and creating support structures around our guys, but [it's] just simply the nature of the
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> beast. When you are working with a professional team and you are in a city all by
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> yourself there are just certain challenges that are present, and one of them is you are not
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> going to have a lot of support from the ministry per se just because there is only going to
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> be one of you.

Smith saw how AIA had improved its internal accountability structures over time, but recognized

that as long as he was the only person serving his organization accountability would be

challenging and not feature in-person interaction. While accountability structures were loose,

both Smith and Thomas felt supported by the organization.

During our interview, AIA staff member Angelo Davis, who worked with chaplains affiliated

with professional teams, described the organization's accountability mechanisms by referencing

monthly reports, annual training sessions and maintaining close contact with chaplains. He said

that the evaluations submitted each month were reviewed with the chaplain, and that a staff

member at AIA would speak with an NFL club representative once or twice a year to gauge the

performance and effectiveness of the chaplain. Davis called these individuals "gatekeepers",

noting that they could be coaches, general managers or players. This was confirmed by Anthony Thomas, who said that Angelo Davis spoke to the head coach of the Casey Tigers twice a year regarding chaplaincy; however, Steve Smith stated that no one from AIA had contact with anyone at the Ely Eagles. While the review of monthly or annual reports suggested a more formal level of accountability, all three men involved with AIA suggested that the more relational, informal approach to accountability that was predicated on checking-in with individuals and offering encouragement was prioritized and used more consistently. For example, when Davis spoke to members of the host organization this appeared to be more of an informal check-in than a structured evaluation. While this may loosely resemble a supervisory relationship, as suggested by Paterson (2015), it was unclear how quality of care or skills were formally or intentionally developed in these sessions. When asked if more organizational accountability would be a benefit for the chaplains, Davis said, "It definitely doesn't hurt. But you have to keep in mind that not all NFL clubs would be able to really evaluate from a spiritual perspective." Davis went on to explain that if the gatekeeper did not, "understand the spiritual support and what the chaplains offer then the perspective of that evaluation could be skewed. But does it help to have other maybe non-spiritually accountability evaluations? Yeah for sure." Davis' response suggests that more accountability from the host organizations would be beneficial, but this may not include missional or spiritual accountability.

All four EPL chaplains were affiliated with SCUK. The organization was seen by Lewis Sherwood and Peter Monahan not as an entity that would provide accountability, but rather as a social network that helped connect and train chaplains. However, SCUK saw accountability as a part of their work with chaplains. During e-mail correspondence, SCUK staff member Thomas

Powell wrote, "Accountability is built in to [our] Code [of Practice] and the expectations of chaplains which includes ongoing training and attendance at regional [meetings] and [the annual national] conference." SCUK staff also visited most chaplains at their club once a year and would speak with them on the phone. This provided another layer of connection between the chaplains and the organization. SCUK could also contact club representatives directly if need be, although this was not done on a regular basis. Outside of para-church organizations, chaplains received minimal accountability from their parish or larger denominational body. Both in the US and UK, accountability regarding ministry skills appeared to be more informal, if present at all, affirming the research of Waller et. al (2010).

George Brown and Todd Dempsey (NFL), and Duncan Murray and Lewis Sherwood (EPL) all served in ministry roles at churches alongside their positions as sports chaplains. Brown and Sherwood were full-time pastors within their congregations, while Dempsey served in a part-time role and Murray's focus was on community engagement. While their church members, other staff, and congregational elders or denominational bishop were aware of the respondent's work as a sports chaplain there was no accountability or oversight regarding their chaplaincy. George Brown had two congregational elders who provided spiritual oversight to his work at the church, but he said that they did not ask about his position as an NFL chaplain. Brown informed the elders of his church about his sports chaplaincy responsibilities in season, but did not want to speak too much about his work with the Martinsville Power in his church to protect both ministries, suggesting that the church's identity should not involve his ministry to the hometown professional football team. Todd Dempsey articulated similar notions of identity, specifically not wanting the notoriety of a position with an NFL team to become the focal point of his parish

ministry. EPL chaplains who served in a parish also saw their work in the parish as separate from their work as sports chaplains, with minimal overlap between the two. While chaplains did not want the public prominence of their chaplaincy to hinder their parish ministry, this divide also created a space where they were not held accountable for their witness within the community. This corresponds to Todd et al.'s (2014) observation that there is a division between chaplaincy and parish ministry which excludes the chaplain's work from ecclesiastical lines of communication and accountability. Overall, chaplains who served local churches received little accountability from their home parish, even though people within the community supported this ministry.

Peter Monahan was the only chaplain in either league who set up an explicit line of accountability with an individual outside the club. Monahan regularly met with the bishop of the Church of England diocese where Tibsbury Rovers is located:

> So I have set up a relationship with the Bishop of [the diocese] to offer me some sort of oversight outside the club. … So we meet quarterly. We pray together, we talk about each other's roles, so he talks about what he is doing, I talk about what I am doing and we kind of, we support one another both through prayer; and then between times if something comes up and we want to get a quick response we will email one another.

Monahan described a relationship of mutual accountability that served both men in some form. This was initiated by Monahan and affirms other responses that discussed the need of the chaplain to be proactive in seeking avenues of accountability. Monahan's relationship with the local bishop did not resemble the kind of supervision relationship recommended by Paterson (2015), as it was one of mutual support as opposed to skill development. Responding to

questions on accountability, chaplains rarely mentioned notions of mission or missional objectives. George Brown was the only chaplain to speak about missional accountability, saying that he felt accountable to teach from the Bible and support those at Oakhill FC. Through their responses, chaplains described inconsistent levels of accountability that was often informal and lacked a missional lens. This was also seen in evaluations of the chaplain's work.

8.3 Formal Evaluation Structures

Chaplains were asked about any formal evaluations completed by their host or sending organizations regarding their work as a chaplain, as well as any self-appraisal mechanisms utilized. Previous literature on sports chaplaincy has not specifically addressed the evaluation mechanisms used to assess sports chaplains, although Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2010: 22) state that training programs for sports chaplains have "few outcomes-based measures in place to demonstrate competency".[39] The data gathered in this study affirms this conclusion. Chaplains described few formal processes of evaluation used by their host organization, sending body or themselves. No chaplain had a formally structured review and/or evaluation process initiated by the club. The lack of evaluation from host organizations was addressed in the previous chapter and was framed as one aspect of the chaplain's perceived marginality.

Half of the chaplains in the study, one in the EPL and three in the NFL, met with a member of their organization to discuss their work, however this was more informal and did not include a member of the host entity independently evaluating the work of the chaplain or providing formal, documented feedback. All three NFL chaplains completed this as an end of season review with

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[39] To date, the author knows of no academic or in-depth research on the formal evaluation mechanisms of the chaplain, in sport or any other context.

their central contact in the club. Anthony Thomas would meet with the head coach and described their meetings, saying, "I just tell him who hosted [Bible] study, I will tell him what players came, what was our average attendance, [and] I will give him the book that we did. So just more of an outline of what took place that year. … [I will] write it up, so I send him [that document in] an email." In this process, Thomas had both verbal and written elements of evaluation regarding his work in season, although the written element was self-reported. As previously mentioned, Todd Dempsey also compiled a year in review document for the club's general manager. This document was similar to Thomas' in describing what programing, such as Bible study and worship, he offered and average attendance numbers, although he did not disclose names of attendees. Dempsey also included findings from a survey he sent out to people who participated in chaplaincy related programming. Dempsey described the survey as follows:

It basically asked, 'Hey, what did you like about this season, what did you not like about the season, and what would you change about the season?' I talked specifically about our chapel messages, our Bible Studies, and then anything else. [I also] gave them the freedom to comment on anything else. … I did that for all three areas. [This survey was sent to] the people that have attended the player's study, the people that attended the operational study and the people that attended the coach and scout study.

Dempsey acknowledged that he did not get many completed surveys, but the feedback received was positive and helpful. Dempsey also included findings of the survey in his end of year review document, which was presented to the general manager at their end of season meeting. Dempsey described this interaction as follows, "I showed that to him, I don't think he read it. He glanced over it and then he asked, 'hey how's it going' and moved on." Even though Dempsey was willing to evaluate and review the programming he led throughout the season, this review

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process did not appear to be a priority for his direct report. Similar to Peter Monahan and Duncan Murray's desire for accountability, Dempsey's attempt to engage in evaluation did not appear to be a priority for the host organization. When discussing institutional accountability, Paget and McCormick (2006) assume that the host organization have specific mechanisms and evaluations in place to facilitate this kind of activity. The data collected in this study would suggest that this is not always the case, and that chaplains may struggle to receive institutional evaluation if this process is not already in place. Evaluation from sending bodies, be it parish churches or para-church organizations, were also limited.

The Casey Tigers' Anthony Thomas and Steve Smith of the Ely Eagles completed the aforementioned AIA monthly and annual reports. These reports cover a wide variety of topics including professional and personal goals, spiritual growth and programming led at the club. In their yearly review, AIA staff members are also asked about how many people they have shared the gospel with, how many of those people chose to accept the Christian faith, amongst other evangelistic questions. These queries, according to Smith, asked for specific numerical answers and were sent to the national headquarters for reporting purposes. When asked if there were ramifications for not meeting specific numerical thresholds, Smith stated that an individual may be asked to explain their answers, more out of concern for the individual and their ministry than the need to achieve certain numbers. All AIA evaluations were completed by the chaplain and relied fully on self-disclosure and were not available to members of the host organization. At no point were chaplains observed by an AIA staff member or individual within their host organization for these evaluations, however, as mentioned, Angelo Davis did speak with a representative from the host organization multiple times a year regarding the chaplaincy services

offered, but these conversations, to the author's knowledge, did not feature in any formal evaluation. Reports were reviewed by the AIA regional director, which were assigned based off geographic location, and individuals at the national headquarters. These reports were reviewed with the individual chaplains, seeking to help them monitor progress and achieve ministry goals. While AIA's process of formal evaluation utilized a specific mechanism and was reviewed by the host organization, the information collected was primarily self-disclosed, lacking any element of independent observation or peer evaluation.

In the UK, no sending body or parachurch organization had a formal evaluation process. Alastair McDaniel was not evaluated by Oakhill FC, however he listed his work within the club on his Church of England evaluation filled out once every two years, but this was not a requirement. SCUK did not have a formal evaluation process for chaplains, however, Thomas Powell wrote in an email that they:

> advocate an annual review to be done by the clubs but realistically this rarely happens.
> Best practice would be for each club to have an annual review perhaps with a
> representative of SCUK involved as well; but given the priority (lack of by the Club) and
> capacity (of SCUK) this is unlikely to happen.

SCUK recognized that a formal annual evaluation would be beneficial, but also acknowledged the challenges associated with this, both in relation to their own capacity to complete this task and the desires of host organizations to participate. Slater (2015) affirms the difficulty in providing consistent supervision and evaluation, particularly if chaplains are part-time. The lack of evaluation by sending bodies is noticeable, revealing a disconnect between the intention of sending someone to minister within the community and maintaining that ministry. Similar to the

discussion in the previous section, this disconnect affirms the work of Todd et al. (2014), who's qualitive research demonstrates the gap between chaplains and their sending body. Personal evaluations and appraisal mechanism mirrored other elements of accountability, being largely dependent on the individual and informal in nature.

Half of the chaplains, two in each league, completed some type of personal appraisal, although no chaplain used a formal rubric or template. Like other respondents, Lewis Sherwood set goals before each season. He described this in an email, writing, "I would put down a set of goals & objectives to help give some sense of focus – the club is not aware of this." When asked why he does not share his goals, he replied, "I think partly it's because they have a spiritual edge to them, I don't think I felt that they would understand. I think it'd be like I'd have to explain myself." While he personally reviewed these goals throughout the year, Sherwood did not share these goals with anyone at the club or SCUK. The lack of sharing in this regard raises concerns regarding the nature of these goals. While spiritual goals may have been out of place for the host organization, to refuse to share them with SCUK is particularly curious. As Sherwood did not share these goals with the author, assumptions regarding the nature of these goals will not be made. Anthony Thomas and his wife reviewed their programming on a weekly basis as a way of assessing previous content and planning for future events. This form of accountability was, according to Thomas, productive and helped both provide better ministry programming. While some chaplains found self-evaluation to be beneficial, others suggested that they did not naturally gravitate toward this discipline. Personal appraisal mechanisms were comparable with all others areas of evaluation discussed, as they were inconsistent and featured few formal processes and structures. Even though responses from chaplains in both leagues were similar in

relation to evaluation, issues surrounding safeguarding training and avenues for reporting varied widely.

8.4 Safeguarding

The data compiled in this study suggests that EPL clubs focused more on safeguarding than NFL organizations. This difference may occur because of the populations clubs serve, historical issues surrounding interactions with those groups and government policy in each nation. While the EPL and NFL are professional sports leagues, clubs within the Premier League do not only have a professional first team like the NFL, rather many English professional football clubs also have youth academies. Due to this, these clubs directly interact with minors and, potentially, other vulnerable populations on a regular basis. While NFL teams may interact with children or other vulnerable populations by way of charity events or coaching clinics, the author is not aware of an NFL team that directly runs or supports a youth American football team or works with minors in such a deliberate and close fashion. In recent years, numerous UK football clubs have addressed allegations and patterns of abuse, oftentimes historic, in relation to their youth academies (Oliver and Parker, 2019). As a result of these revelations, maintaining safeguarding standards and providing relevant training has become a priority for football in the UK. To this end, the FA has produced policies and guidelines for safeguarding children at all levels of the game, including anti-bullying, sexual abuse, and other types of abuse policies, as well as provisions for whistle-blowers who report potential safeguarding violations (Football Association, 2021). Furthermore, a more intentional focus on safeguarding in UK sports is required due to government policy mandating safeguarding protocols for those who work with minors. Since the implementation of The Children Act 1989 and 2004, the UK government has provided guidance and protocols for

safeguarding measures. Currently, "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" is provided

by the Department of Education, the department overseeing all safeguarding relating to minors

(Department of Education, 2018). This document states that all organizations working with

minors must have policies and various measures to ensure the safeguarding of those in their care.

Safeguarding guidelines for sporting organizations are laid out by Sport England, a non-

departmental public body overseen by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, in

partnership with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is a UK charity

focused on preventing child abuse (see National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Children, 2021). While the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act of 2006 protects all vulnerable

groups, it is not referenced in the literature put out by Sporting England. To the author's

knowledge, there is no federal statutes in the US mandating safeguarding to the extent done in

the UK, rather states have different legislation and policies that apply within their boundaries.

While priority has been placed on minors, adults also need safeguarding support. In her report on

duty of care in UK sport, Grey-Thompson (2017) highlights the need to strengthen policies

around adult safeguarding, arguing that more focus is on the protection of minors to the

detriment of adult safeguarding provisions. Literature on the role of the sports chaplain and

safeguarding is limited, with Oliver and Parker (2019) completing the only research on the

relationship between the two, and Hemmings et al (2019) identifying the sports chaplain as an

asset for football clubs within their wider holistic support and safeguarding networks. Given the

focus on safeguarding within the EPL clubs, responses from UK chaplains will be addressed

first.

All chaplains associated with SCUK are required to have government background checks

through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and go through safeguarding training at their

SCUK induction training day. SCUK encourages chaplains to be trained and included in any

club run safeguarding procedures as well; however, SCUK recognizes that it is the club's

responsibility to include the chaplains in this manner. All EPL chaplains within the study

conveyed that they had cleared DBS clearance and had completed the required SCUK

safeguarding training. Given that all chaplains were also associated with other ecclesiastical

bodies, such as the Church of England, they had completed additional safeguarding training and

requirements for these entities. All EPL chaplains also expressed comfort in reporting structures

around safeguarding issues at their respective clubs, acknowledging that they knew who and

where to report issues to and believed that this process was confidential. This is in line with

SCUK policy that asks clubs to inform chaplains of their confidential reporting structure.

All EPL chaplains knew the safeguarding officer at their club and worked within the

organization's safeguarding requirements, but they were not all trained by their host

organization. Duncan Murray had not gone through his club's safeguarding training, but was

involved in the club's safeguarding meetings. These meetings took place once every six weeks

and addressed safeguarding policy and any other relevant issues with various members of staff,

such as the safeguarding officer, welfare officer, amongst others, present. Murray's involvement

in these meetings is an example of how chaplains can be a part of a holistic group addressing

safeguarding measures, affirming the work of Oliver and Parker (2019), Hemmings and Chawner

(2019), and Roe and Parker (2016). Only Peter Monahan had been involved in club training,

however, this occurred at the end of his seventh season with the club. SCUK would like to see this type of inclusion become standard for chaplains. Powell elaborated on this:

> I would like every club and sport to ensure that all chaplains are included in safeguarding training. We are currently having discussions through our safeguarding officer with the governing bodies in English football. It is hoped that this will result in chaplains being offered the relevant training with funding through such bodies.

In another email, he provided an update on the training that had been implemented and occurred at the SCUK 2018 annual conference:

> we had a three hour session on safeguarding delivered by an FA qualified trainer. This was to ensure that those chaplains who had not received the adequate training at their own clubs (usually smaller clubs) were able to receive the correct recognized training plus certificate. This is something we may repeat in the future. The cost of the above was covered by the EFL.

Trainings such as this demonstrate SCUK, the FA and the EFL's commitment to training sports chaplains in safeguarding issues. This same commitment and focus were not present in the NFL.

Given the issues discussed above, safeguarding training and policy for chaplains in the NFL was limited. No chaplain brought up having to complete a background check to work as the team chaplain, and there was no safeguarding training required of the individual from the host organization. Hemmings et al. (2019) note that mental health awareness training is required for all NFL staff, however neither they nor any respondents in the study mentioned this as a requirement for a chaplain. The lack of safety checks for external individuals working with sports organizations is highlighted by Grey-Thompson (2017) as an area of concern that needs to

be addressed by clubs and governing bodies of individual sports. It should be noted that no NFL chaplain spoke of interacting with minors or other vulnerable groups in their role as chaplains of their respective clubs. Angelo Davis noted that chaplains on staff with AIA had completed background checks when coming onto staff and were trained in AIA's reporting structure, which began with the chaplain's supervisors and would go through the Cru human resources department and legal team. Anthony Thomas referenced this structure, and said that this was how he would report such issues. Angelo Davis also said that all chaplains were subject to the NFL Personal Conduct Policy, which states, "**Everyone** [sic] who is part of the league must refrain from 'conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in' the NFL" (National Football League, 2021). The policy goes on to list a variety of different groups associated with league, but does not specifically state anything about chaplains or volunteers. No chaplain referred to this policy during the interview process. The only safeguarding training disclosed discussed an AIA conference that took place during the interview season. As previously mentioned, three of four NFL chaplains had attended and received training on suicide prevention from a league official at the AIA NFL chaplains retreat. All chaplains who attended spoke of the benefits of learning about this subject and crisis management from those within the league.

When specifically asked about reporting structures, no NFL chaplain had been informed of host organization policies surrounding the reporting of abuse. Furthermore, there were no policies communicated to the chaplain regarding whistle-blowing and protecting them from allegation. When discussing how he would handle such a situation, Steve Smith said:

> I would just have people at the facility who would vouch for my character over a long
>
> time, but again I am on my own. I am not in an office, so I don't know if I would be

accused of something I don't know what I would have in place other than the people

around the facility who know me throughout the years and could vouch for my character.

Other chaplains expressed similar sentiments, stating they would have people who could speak

for them or who they would confide in. Anthony Thomas felt that, as a volunteer, there were less

explicit requirements regarding the reporting of issues to the organization. To the author's

knowledge, there is no academic literature on the role of character witnesses in safeguarding

cases. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008) contend that ensuring that sports chaplains are qualified

is of utmost importance in the field. While the authors focus on differences in spiritual care

versus counseling, understanding reporting structures around sensitive issues and abuse should

also be a part of the qualifications of the sports chaplain. While the NFL chaplains may not

interact with minors, it is still important to have structures in place to protect them from

allegation and to provide them confidential ways to report abuse or other pertinent issues.

The term safeguarding, itself, meant very little to NFL chaplains. This can be attributed to

differences in terminology, with 'boundary training' or 'mandatory reporting' being the more

common used names for this type of training and procedure, and the non-existent requirements

around safeguarding for them to complete their work. However, this did not change chaplain's

responses when the terminology of boundary training or mandatory reporting was also utilized in

interviews. When discussing what would occur if they were put in a situation that would need to

be reported, some NFL chaplains became defensive and took questions about safeguarding as a

potential accusation of their own character. Three chaplains stated that they doubted an issue like

this would ever arise due to how they conducted themselves and because one had not occurred in

the past. This was not the intention of these questions; however, this data reveals an area in need

of further training for NFL chaplains. Safeguarding training is not beneficial because issues have occurred, but rather that when these types of unforeseen challenges arise the individual is prepared to handle them appropriately. For sports chaplaincy to reach its full potential chaplains must be trained on appropriate reporting structures for issues of abuse or allegations. How this type of structure may benefit the chaplain was discussed by Todd Dempsey.

When asked about any safeguarding measures he would like to see enacted, Todd Dempsey addressed the need to keep chaplains safe from pressures surrounding the divulging of sensitive information:

> I think having a reporting structure that allowed there to be a safe place for [the chaplain], if a team was doing a chaplain wrong, to be able to tell someone in the NFL. … I know of a coach who told a chaplain, 'I need you to tell me when players are struggling with things' and he [the chaplain] said, 'I can't do that, that is unethical for me to rat on these players' and he [the coach] said, 'You need to do that or you don't have a job here.' So he lost his job.

Dempsey was not the only chaplain to mention this specific situation, but was the only one who connected this event to potential safeguarding measures. Dempsey's response emphasizes the point that safeguarding is not only about protecting others, but also provides protection for chaplains as well. The lack of the standards and policy surrounding the chaplain's work within an NFL organization has not been addressed in previous literature, and is a concerning element regarding the practical nature of sports chaplaincy in the NFL. In this, further academic research and practical policy are needed. Accountability in relation to safeguarding is of crucial

importance for the work of the chaplain and must continue to be prioritized in training, alongside professional development.

8.5 Professional development

Professional development was mostly self-directed and the amount of chaplaincy or sports chaplaincy specific training varied. Chaplains primary source of professional development was reading books, although these were not necessarily specifically focused on chaplaincy. Chaplaincy specific professional development was limited by a variety of factors. First, the majority of chaplains are part-time within their host club. This meant that training and development had to fit in with other elements of their professional and personal life. Oakhill FC's Alastair McDaniel cited time as a major issue in completing sports chaplaincy specific professional development, "I think I've only been to one sports chaplaincy conference. Not because I didn't like it, it was brilliant. But then in successive years it's been harder to get to because of other work commitments and stuff." McDaniel took part in the Church of England's Senior Leadership Learning and Development Program and this was his primary focus for development.[40] Alongside other work, chaplains also had family expectations. When asked why he had not done professional development, Todd Dempsey said he had to balance his family responsibilities with his position as the chaplain of his team and his work an associate pastor at a local church. As a result of this, he stated he did not have adequate time to partake in professional development.

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[40] The Church of England's Senior Leadership Learning and Development Program is "designed to support clergy identified as having potential for taking on significantly wider responsibilities in the future" (Church of England, 2021). In this, it is advertised as a learning community that helps those who partake in discernment and growth.

Other than Dempsey, all chaplains were volunteers in their host organizations. The voluntary nature of the role also hindered professional development. Powell noted that SCUK "encourage[s] chaplains to attend [SCUK] training but as they are volunteers and their primary relationship is with their club or sport [therefore] we cannot enforce it." Lewis Sherwood addressed the voluntary nature of chaplaincy and its effect on chaplaincy specific training:

> Most of us [chaplains] have not been trained much really. You just become the Vicar who attached themselves [to the club] and then might have a little bit of extra training if they're prepared to take it up. It's much more informal. … I think what's happening with chaplaincy here is that it's moved from being very much an ad hoc, you know, local minister just coming in and being like a mate of the club to being a lot more about trying to sharpen that up. So I'm probably an example of the old gang who's having to learn to do things a bit clearer and that's really good. … The training they offer with sports chaplaincy is really brilliant on mental health, on safeguarding, all of this stuff. But few chaplains actually go to it. … Is it just because we've got too much going on in our lives we should probably do, but why we don't make it a priority for training.

Between busy schedules, family obligations, training for other ministry endeavors and the voluntary nature of the position, sports chaplaincy specific training was not always a top priority. This is consistent with Waller, Dizikus and Hardin's (2010) research with collegiate chaplains. Of the 55 chaplains surveyed in their study, one third of respondents did not complete any chaplaincy specific training (see also Waller, 2016). The authors use the example of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) as an example of training or continuing development that is normative for other forms of chaplaincy, i.e, hospital chaplaincy, but not often completed by sports chaplains. Completion of CPE training is often a requirement for employment for US-based

chaplains. None of the chaplains in the study had completed any units of CPE. The absence of

CPE training for sports chaplains creates a divide between those who serve in sports and others

branches of chaplaincy, both in terms of common language and experience as well as in regards

to training. However, even if a sports chaplain desired to complete CPE, they would need to go

outside the field of sport to undergo this training. Currently, the Association of Clinical Pastoral

Education (ACPE), the only organization recognized by the US Department of Education to

accredit CPE, has no placements within the world of sport.[41] While exposure to different

contexts would be beneficial, this provides an added challenge to those serving in sports

chaplaincy. Recommendations regarding the implementation of CPE requirements for sports

chaplains will be discussed in the chapter ten. Waller, Dizikus and Hardin's research featured a

larger sample size than the current study and was quantitative in nature, but still identified the

concerns with continued professional development and the lack of standards for this growth

within sports chaplaincy. However, all chaplains had participated in sports chaplaincy specific

development and found it beneficial.

Chaplains learned about sports chaplaincy professional development primarily through para-

church organizations and email listservs. Para-church organizations in the UK and US ran

conferences and training for their chaplains at various times in the year. As previously

mentioned, AIA chaplains met once a year for a retreat to receive training and engage with one

another. Davis described a wide range of trainings put on by AIA including "seminary trainings,

diversity training, domestic violence/sexual assault training, suicide prevention training,

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[41] ACPE's website describes a rigorous process of accreditation, for sites and their educators, requiring both to agree to specific standards of practice. Sites provide yearly reports and are visited each six years by ACPE to assure programs maintain standards. This process, according to ACPE, allows for "quality assurance" and standards of education to be maintained (Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, 2021).

discipleship/evangelism training, communication training, as well as personal growth and development training." Yearly training did not include all of these elements, but would emphasize one area. Who provided this training and what kind of accreditation or credentialing they had was not stated. When discussing training put on by AIA, Davis also mentioned training that targeted athletes who were not religious, "we're doing some character-based training as well so that our chaplains are able to serve those players that may or may not be interested in faith, but would definitely want to grow in their character in some way." This training helps expand the range of skills and abilities for chaplains affiliated with AIA and broaden their ministry so that it is more accessible to people of other faiths. While Todd Dempsey had access to the retreat, it was not clear if other non-AIA affiliated chaplains could also participate in their professional development.

SCUK offered numerous training sessions throughout the year. Powell provided details surrounding the type of training received:

> we have an annual conference and at least two other sessions of training on offer for chaplains a year. … At the June [20]18 conference chaplains were offered choices of training in Media, Bereavement, Stress and Gambling Addiction as well as the aforementioned Safeguarding. At the 2019 conference there will an emphasis on Mental Health Awareness/First Aid with three sessions being delivered. Chaplains now receive certificates on completion of each area of training and we are looking at accreditation.

The two training sessions offered outside of the annual conference took place at various locations throughout the UK so chaplains did not have to travel long distances. Neither SCUK or AIA

described training that was missionally focused, but rather both groups detailed trainings that were skill based.

Trainings provided by these organizations did not appear to be aligned with a particular academic institution or accredited body, although SCUK was working towards accreditation. Advanced academic study in sports ministry is available in both countries. Truett Seminary at Baylor University in Waco, Texas offer a Sports Ministry Program that "allow[s] seminary students to develop a theologically-informed and practically-designed program of study that engages, appreciates, critiques, and connects with sports" (Baylor University, 2021). This is a concentration within their Masters of Divinity program. Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia offers a Masters of Sports Chaplaincy through an online course. In the United Kingdom, the University of Cardiff offers a Masters of Theology in Chaplaincy Studies with specialism in sports chaplaincy and PhD study programmes in sports ministry/chaplaincy. This course was previously offered at the University of Gloucestershire as the Masters of Sports and Christian Outreach (Sports Chaplaincy) and continues to be endorsed by SCUK and the Global Sports Chaplaincy Association (GSCA). Meanwhile, Ridley Hall Theological College (Cambridge, UK) offer a Certificate in Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission with specialism in Sport and Wellbeing for sports ministers and sports chaplains and PhD study programmes sports ministry/chaplaincy. While not affiliated with an academic institution, the GCSA provides its own six-session course online that is a free resource for training sports chaplains. Duncan Murray and Peter Monahan had both completed their Masters in Sports and Christian Outreach (Sports Chaplaincy) at the University of Gloucestershire. Other than these two, chaplains in the study did not hold academic degrees specializing in sports chaplaincy or chaplaincy more

broadly. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2010: 22) argued that sports chaplaincy training and standards of practice are still in their "foundational stages". The lack of sports chaplaincy specific training by chaplains within this study affirms this notion and suggests that these training programs are not yet normative or required to work in elite sport. This goes against the writing of Maranise (2016: 138) who states, "the academic body of knowledge often covered by sports chaplains will naturally include their chaplaincy training" amongst other theological studies. The responses of chaplains within this study suggest that chaplaincy specific training was not prevalent within their theological training or consistently a part of continuing professional development.

No club required their chaplain to complete professional development and no chaplain within the study had been encouraged by their club to complete training. Alastair McDaniel's SCUK yearly membership dues were covered by his club, but this did not appear to equal an expectation of development. Duncan Murray believed that chaplaincy development is not considered by the club:

> It's just not on their radar. I have to be proactive and I would probably let the safeguarding officer know or let the human resources office know [I completed professional development]. … They wouldn't be proactive. The day I get a phone call from somebody at [the club] saying, 'Hey [Duncan], we'd like to send you on this course, we think it'd be really helpful,' I would probably fall over in shock.

If host organizations desire a chaplain to serve their constituents effectively they should support and promote chaplaincy specific training, insisting that their chaplains are qualified to fill these roles and meet the need of the community. For sports chaplains to effectively minister within

elite sports settings training and professional development must be a priority. Focused sports chaplaincy training that is consistently attended will help chaplains provide high level, professional care that supports the chaplain their work as a witness to God's mission in a specific context.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the accountability structures surrounding sports chaplains. The data demonstrates that these structures are often informal and inconsistent. Chaplains did not have required formal evaluations, safeguarding training or professional development requirements from their host organization. In all these areas, chaplains had to be proactive in engaging with others at their club. Furthermore, their sending bodies requirements in these areas varied. Para-church organizations worked to provide effective evaluation and training, but recognized that more accountability from host organizations would be beneficial. The majority of evaluation was self-appraisal, which tended to focus on reflection of previous ministry initiatives. It did not include reflection on the missional call of the chaplain or involve consistent supervision. In terms of safeguarding, EPL chaplains were more familiar with these issues and proficient in their understandings of reporting structures within their host organizations. This was not the case within the NFL, and the lack of familiarity with these elements is concerning. Finally, no chaplains expressed accountability around the missional nature of their work. As a central aspect of their calling and motivation for serving those in sport, more reflection and continuous discussion is needed on this element. To address this, sending bodies, be they a parish church or parachurch organization, should have more explicit lines of accountability, particularly in terms of the missional and spiritual dimension of the chaplain's work. As AIA's Angelo Davis noted,

host organizations are not equipped to assess the spiritual component of chaplaincy, and sending bodies can play pivotal roles in providing this kind of accountability. If an entity is willing to send the chaplain out to witness to God's love and goodness, they should also be willing to continually assess and support this ministry initiative.

Overall, the data suggests that there are still large areas for improvement in relation to the sports chaplain's accountability structures. Waller et al.'s (2010) observation that sports chaplaincy continuing education is still in an introductory period may be applied to accountability and evaluation as well, with both areas also lacking formal boundaries or codified norms within the field. However, for sports chaplaincy to develop further, it will need to be held accountable by its host organizations as well. For sports chaplaincy to be taken more seriously and reach its potential, further measures of accountability should be enacted by host institutions and professional leagues. Even though chaplains are volunteers, they should be vetted and meet standards of training, such as passing background checks and the completion of mandatory coursework before engaging in this ministry. Furthermore, host organizations should evaluate the role of the chaplain in a more formal and consistent manner. Elite sports clubs have high standards for staff and athletes, and their expectations for the chaplain should be no different. Improved evaluation, incorporation into organizational safeguarding measures and consistent professional development that can be monitored will add legitimacy, expertise and help chaplaincy reach its professional and missional potential.

Up to this point, the present study has focused on various practical elements of the sports chaplain's work. It has not focused on the motivation behind this work or the manner in which

the spiritual is intertwined with their position. In the final data chapter, we will assess how the chaplains personal discipleship and witness to Jesus Christ influenced their witness and service as a chaplain.

Chapter Nine:

Discipleship and the Sports Chaplain

9.0 Introduction

In the Christian faith, the call to discipleship begins with the simplicity of two words, "Follow me" (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27, NRSV). At its most basic, Christian discipleship is following Jesus of Nazareth and being obedient to Him. While the notion of 'following' can sound simplistic, there is depth and complexity within this call. Bonhoeffer (1995: 59) argues that there is no Christian faith without discipleship to Jesus Christ, writing, "Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ".[42] The importance of discipleship makes it central to mission, as it calls the believer and the community at large to follow the Triune God and witness to the presence of the divine throughout the world.

Discipleship manifests itself in collective and personal ways, often shifting between the two. A collective understanding of discipleship refers to participation in communal activities such as small groups, prayer meetings, Bible study and one-on-one discipleship with a mentor or leader. Collective discipleship is subjective in relation to the context of the Christian community in question and their response to the call to "Follow me." In following Jesus, the disciple's collective witness may include evangelism, transmitting the Gospel through word and deed. However, discipleship is not something that is only done alongside others but includes also an

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[42] While a Christian disciple follows the Triune God, discipleship can be understood as the following of Jesus Christ and learning from His teachings. In this regard, discipleship prioritizes the figure of Jesus within the Trinity, although this does not discount the other two entities within this triune relationship. The author defers to the work of Bonhoeffer (1995) in this notion.

individual dimension. Personal discipleship refers to how the individual believer responds to Jesus' call. Like collective discipleship, elements of personal discipleship are subjective but can refer to personal devotional practices such as prayer, meditation, scripture reading or journaling, amongst other activities. Only the individual believer can fully understand how they are personally and most appropriately connected with the Triune God. Even though discipleship has been discussed in relation to mission, the personal nature of discipleship has not been consistently addressed in missiological literature. While the literature on mission and *missio Dei* has focused on the sending and outward nature of faith, this does not diminish the importance of the individual component of discipleship (see Whitmore, 2018).

This chapter argues that the personal discipleship of the chaplain is crucial to their witness and ministry. The chapter begins by identifying how chaplains understood discipleship within the context of their everyday lives and how this manifested in their working relationships. The chapter then looks at how evangelism may present itself within the role of the chaplain in elite sports settings. All respondents approached evangelism from an 'incarnational' perspective as opposed to a 'proclamation' viewpoint, although some were more explicit in their desire to evangelize than others. After discussing discipleship and evangelism, the chapter focuses on the difficulties in cultivating and maintaining these types of interactions within host organizations. While both discipleship and evangelism relationships can be beneficial, chaplains reported various challenges associated with the intentional nature of building and maintaining these types of connections. However, even when expressing difficulty regarding their work, chaplains continuously referenced the need for personal discipleship. The chapter concludes by re-

considering the importance of personal discipleship in the lives of sports chaplains, suggesting that personal discipleship is central to the *missio Dei* and the chaplain's public witness.

9.1 Defining 'discipleship'

When asked to define discipleship chaplains focused on three elements: (i) following Jesus, (ii) personal growth, (iii) and relationships. Just as Bonhoeffer (1995) proclaimed that there is no Christian witness without discipleship to Jesus, chaplains consistently began definitions of discipleship with Jesus Christ. EPL chaplain Lewis Sherwood was a case in point:

> Discipleship means [to be a] follower of Jesus, really. … A disciple is you're learning from the Master aren't you? So, I think discipleship will be about, if someone's become a Christian, or a player has become a Christian in this context ... then you're trying to help them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. So you're trying to help them, to equip them as a disciple-*er*, but in the end discipleship is about getting to know Jesus better. Through word, through prayer, through support, through fellowship.

Here Sherwood consistently brings discipleship back to following Jesus and the individual's engagement with the divine. This view was consistent from chaplains in both leagues. For Sherwood, discipleship featured both personal and collective elements, which was comparable with other chaplains within the study. In turn, Sherwood's definition also highlights the second element articulated in definitions of discipleship: helping others grow in the Christian faith.

Growth in discipleship was articulated in two ways: first, for the disciple to grow while in relationship with Jesus and learn from Him, and second, for the disciple to grow while in a relationship with another Christian and learn from them. This duality provides the disciple with

the opportunity to grow in faith by following and emulating Jesus as well as a member of the Christian community in a mentor-mentee relationship. Kinsford City chaplain Duncan Murray prioritised the latter in his definition: "Discipleship means … coming alongside someone and sharing your life with them so that they drink from you and learn from you, and probably, if you are humble enough, you will learn from them as well." Murray and Sherwood both discussed leading others in a discipleship relationship, specifically helping another grow in their Christian faith. The chaplain's position as a mentor or leader within a discipleship context was prominent throughout discussions with chaplains in both leagues, with six of the eight chaplains having mentorship roles within their host organizations. The terms 'mentor' and 'discipleship' were, at times, synonymous, and a distinction between the two will be made in the next section. Murray's definition of discipleship not only recognizes the educational element of this relationship, but the ability for all parties involved to learn. This was consistently seen in chaplain's discipleship definitions and suggests that leading a person in discipleship is not understood as a one-way interaction, but that both parties should grow in faith. For this connection and mutual learning to occur, relationships must be formed and fostered.

In building relationship two elements were crucial for chaplains, engagement and time. The discipleship relationship is not only between the person who is aiding another in growth, but, more importantly, between the follower and Jesus. Sherwood's definition further affirms this in emphasizing the desire to have someone "know Jesus better." To know another, a person must interact and engage with them. To share life, especially the more sensitive or personal aspects of existence, with someone requires trust. Furthermore, this necessitates a level of intentionality as those involved cultivate a rapport. Lipe (2020) contends that sports chaplains should prioritize

building relationships and being present, particularly during preseason training, as way of establishing relationships and engaging with members of the organization. By engaging with members of the club and intentionally spending time with them, he argues, the sports chaplain will begin to foster relationships that benefit both parties throughout the season. Producing this level of trust and engagement requires the parties concerned to spend time with each other. Anthony Thomas emphasized the importance of time in a discipleship relationship when defining the term:

> Discipleship to me is taking an individual's hand and putting it in the hands of Jesus. Now how do we get from one hand to the other? I mean that is a practical thing. Time. Spending time with them. Teaching them the Bible, giving them experience, going out and applying what we learned.

Thomas' understanding of discipleship recognizes that without time, relationships between Jesus and the disciple or between individual believers will not achieve their purpose. This is particularly true in relation to personal discipleship. The disciple, be it the chaplain or the athlete, must be willing to spend time in relationship with Jesus if, to use the words of Thomas, they are to be "in the hands of Jesus." If one is to grow in one's faith and knowledge of the divine, engaging and spending time cultivating relationships is crucial. Cultivating and maintaining relationships is central to discipleship, evangelism and missional work. Slater (2015) argues that the relationships cultivated by chaplains are manifestations of God's love and mission in the world. This relational approach, according to Slater is a witness to the *missio Dei*. While the three elements of following Jesus, growth and relationship, were prominent in the chaplains' definitions of discipleship, some chaplains also emphasized evangelism as an important factor in cultivating discipleship relationships.

Half of the NFL chaplains interviewed emphasized the desire for those they had discipled to then go forward and disciple others. This notion is in line with conservative evangelical Christian groups, such as AIA and Cru, that emphasize 'winning' souls for Christ, building them in this identity and then sending them out to gain further converts (see Cru, 2021b). This ethos may have an influence on the chaplain and their approach to ministry. For example, speaking on his definition and understanding of discipleship, Steve Smith of the Ely Eagles noted, "I guess if you could put it into one word, [it would be] multiplication." During the course of the season, one of Smith's central goals was to cultivate discipleship relationships and he had been reading extensively on the topic. Smith described an illustration he had heard of the difference between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee to describe discipleship. Smith elaborated on this analogy when defining the term:

> Too many Christians are like the Dead Sea, right? Stuff flows in but it doesn't flow out. But we need to be like the Sea of Galilee; you've got water flowing in and flowing out. So there is input but then there is output. You're reproducing yourself in terms of being a follower of Christ and changing the life of someone else who will then, with the expectation, go and reproduce themselves. So discipleship is reproduction and multiplication.

Smith's emphasis on multiplication demonstrates how, for some, the notion of discipleship features an element of evangelism and future witness. However, Smith's focus on multiplication does not treat discipleship as merely a conversion tool, but rather emphasizes the notion that discipleship cannot be something that is only for the individual's benefit. In his definition, Smith critiques the treatment of discipleship as simply personal gain or growth. A similar critique has

been put forward by Tveit (2018) in his opening address to the 2018 World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism:

> If we first of all and most of all are occupied with ourselves, and what we shall change in our own lives - and we could add: our own communities and churches - we definitely have a lot to do. But the primary focus on ourselves can be exactly the barrier for the real transformation we should contribute to.

Here Tveit warns against placing personal gain as the central priority of Christian faith and witness. Following this line of thought, Steve Smith argued that Christians can never completely fulfill the call to be disciples if they are solely focused on their own piety or salvation; rather discipleship must always look out toward the other. With this in mind, we turn to how collective discipleship was present in the ministry of sports chaplains.

9.2 Collective discipleship

When speaking of how discipleship manifested itself practically in their ministry, chaplains often referred to instances when they had either been discipled by another or had, themselves, discipled others.[43] As a result of this, it can be inferred that chaplains' own identities had been shaped by discipleship relationships and they sought to do the same for others. Perhaps not surprisingly, discipleship was predominately seen in relationships where chaplains were regarded as mentors or teacher to either athletes, coaches, or staff. Lipe (2006: 6) uses the phrase "Sports Mentor" to describe a chaplain who seeks to foster relationships that help the athlete or coach grow in faith in all areas of their life, not only in sports. Waller et al. (2008) also discuss this and

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[43] It is important to note that while discipleship is a term concept and practice that effects all of Christianity, evangelical Christian groups, particularly in the US, have formalized this practice through programming and curriculum that is intentionally focused on the growth of the individual in their faith journey. Given the remit of this work, further analysis and engagement is not possible at this time.

use Lipe's terminology to highlight approaches to sports chaplaincy. As previously mentioned, the terms 'discipleship' and 'mentoring' are often complementary or interchangeable. For example, Lipe (2006) specifically discusses discipleship in his definition of Sports Mentors. Discipleship relationships appear to be predicated on a mutual desire to engage in spiritual direction and growth, oftentimes with one person in the relationship being seen as the teacher or leader. Mentoring may be a part of a discipleship relationship, but is also its own distinct category. Mentoring may be considered a relationship predicating on one individual helping another grow, but without a specific spiritual or religious focus. These terms will be used in this manner throughout the chapter.

Chaplains' descriptions of collective discipleship fell into two distinct categories: educational, emphasizing specific study skills and spiritual exercises; and relational, prioritizing broader engagement with another. This classification does not suggest that the categories are mutually exclusive, as both elements were present in respondent accounts; rather, it simply acknowledges the focus of the chaplain's response when describing these interactions. For some, discipleship with athletes and staff focused on the growth of those in their care regarding specific skills and content associated with the Christian faith. Often these responses centered around gaining knowledge and fostering consistent faith practices, such as reading the Bible. Winburg Warrior's chaplain Todd Dempsey's response encapsulates this notion of discipleship:

> I'm practical in what I'm teaching and how to equip them [players, coaches, staff], so a
> very equipping model of here is what a disciple of Christ looks like, and to give them a
> model of how to read scripture, how to ask questions to God, how to pray, really digging

deeper in their faith, kind of teach them how to study and be a disciple of Christ
themselves.

This focus emphasizes the acquisition and refinement of specific spiritual practices or habits for the individual, and saw discipleship as a vehicle via which one might be educated in relation to Christian belief and practice. For many respondents this was done in a small group or one-to-one setting via scheduled meetings between the individual and the chaplain. Dempsey's use of the term 'equipping' suggests that part of the chaplain's role in discipling others is to provide them with the tools to practice their faith as they progress through life. This is particularly pertinent in the context of elite sports, where staff and players often do not stay in a specific organizational environment or geographical area for long (see Linville, 2016). Chaplains noted that many players lived elsewhere during the off-season and that a high level of client transition and turn over occurred due to athletes being traded, 'cut' (contract termination) from teams, or retiring. Chaplains stated that they often only had a small window of time with individuals therefore making the educational element of discipleship even more important.

Chaplains also emphasized the importance of building relationships with athletes and staff by spending time with them and, when possible, pointing them toward a Christian worldview. For example, George Brown of the Martinsville Power emphasized the aspect of time, stating, "I think [discipleship] should be time, you know I don't think it has a curriculum or anything like that. I mean it is just time, spend time and pour all my life into them." For Brown, specific educational planning was not as important as the relationship that was forged with an athlete; however this did not mean that the Christian message or worldview was not present in terms of

his approach to chaplaincy or discipleship. Such sentiments were also articulated by Tibsbury Rover's Peter Monahan:

> Sometimes I might be trying [to] nudge somebody to more seek a discipleship relationship. So the conversation may not be obviously about God or Christianity but maybe nudging them … into that direction where we are talking about relationships, or we are talking about money or we are talking about something in the world. I am trying to nudge people towards a kind of Christian worldview.

Monahan implies that by focusing on relationship, he is trying to create a space where the possibility of discipleship may begin before the individual commits fully to an intentional discipleship relationship or even before fully committing to Christianity. Both Brown and Monahan's statements locate the process of witnessing or teaching about Jesus in the process of cultivating and engaging in relationship with others. This is in line with Slater (2015), who argues that the relational nature of chaplaincy is a part of this form of ministry's distinct identity. Irrespective of emphasis, chaplains' responses demonstrated an intentional investment in the lives of those present within their club, be it athlete or staff.

Whilst such intentionality was common place amongst respondents, there was one chaplain who did not discuss his investment in the lives of those at his club, but rather what those at the club did for his own discipleship. Alastair McDaniel repeatedly insisted that Oakhill FC did not necessarily need a chaplain. McDaniel had spoken with players who identified as Christian but had not experienced an intentional discipleship relationship with an athlete. When asked how he understood discipleship in his context, McDaniel responded:

I reckon that it's probably the inverse; that they're teaching me more about what it means

to be a disciple of Christ than I am [teaching] them, it's something that they do to me.

And indeed [at the club it] is probably a tool in God's hands for changing me, firstly. …

Being taught that actually, God is in control here. So, when I go to [the club] I have to

start thinking, … 'Am I going here to get approval and affirmation and feel good about

myself because I'm here? … And each day when I walk through those gates, I go 'Lord

you are enough.'

McDaniel recognized the temptation of thinking that his value could be determined by being an

effective chaplain of an elite professional football club. Whereas, Jones et al. (2020) argue that

the sports chaplain can help counteract the performance-based identity of athletes in elite sports,

McDaniel's comments affirm that sports chaplains are also susceptible to a performance-based

mindset. In reference to this, Lipe (2020) suggests that sports chaplains can focus too much on

the numerical success of chaplaincy initiatives and succumb to the same mentality others in

sports embody. Rather than seeing discipleship as a value judgment on the effectiveness of his

ministry, McDaniel saw his role at the club as a way of affirming that God's love was all that

was needed for him to be valued and affirmed as a child of God. Through intentional efforts to

cultivate relationships that allowed for a person to engage with the divine and grow, chaplain's

theoretical understandings of discipleship were demonstrated in their relationships with athletes

and staff. These experiences described have implications in the wider missiological discussion.

As addressed in chapter two, Bosch (1991) argues that to participate in the *missio Dei* is to be in

relationship with God, and that, by engaging in relationships with others is to witness to this

relationship. All of the chaplains within this study provided understandings of discipleship that

emphasized relationships centered around the divine, in which all parties could experience and

grow in the knowledge and love of God. Through this continuous emphasis on relationships, respondents embodied the *missio Dei*, providing a space in which the love of God was demonstrated and professed, whether explicitly or more implicitly,.

A potential danger within the chaplains' definitions and experiences of discipleship was the inward focus of the individual and their personal growth which could create a point of tension with the outward facing witness of the *missio Dei*. While there is a potential for this tension to occur, focusing on individual growth does not have to be a hinderance to the *missio Dei.* His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II (2018), Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, supports this notion stating:

> In today's world, people seem to be focused on themselves; it is easy to be drawn to self-centrism and egoism. Nurturing one's basic spiritual needs should not lead to narcissism or self-centralism. Nurturing one's basic spiritual needs is a healthy way to seek spiritual growth.

Nurturing and affirming the growth of the spiritual needs of a person provides a space in which the individual may be spurred to collective witness. In turn, the invitation for an individual to participate and witness to the *missio Dei* is promoted in the relational discipleship embodied in the work of the chaplain, as they create a space in which the individual can learn about God's work in the world and be a part of this mission in their context. Both Ballard (2009) and Slater (2015) contend that the chaplain's role as a witness to God's presence through relationship is at the core of the chaplain's participation in the *missio Dei*. This witness and invitation to participate in the mission of God can, at times, also lead to opportunities for evangelism.

9.3 Evangelism

As previously stated, Bosch (1991) sees mission as a broader category than evangelism, but recognizes that the two are connected. The notion that evangelism plays a role in mission was widely affirmed by respondents, particularly in relation to how chaplains evangelized and served as a witness to the *missio Dei.* Overall, definitions of evangelism were inconsistent amongst chaplains, with respondents focusing on one of two elements when defining evangelism. Half of the chaplains, two from each league, saw evangelism as being about the proclamation of the Christian faith. However, these chaplains did not utilize a proclamation approach in their ministry. The other half saw proclamation as a secondary aspect to an altogether more incarnational encounter that allowed for the Gospel to be transmitted in less explicit terms, largely through relationships. Like the different definitions of discipleship, elements of proclamation and incarnational approaches were present in all definitions of evangelism, however, priorities varied.

Chaplains whose definitions of evangelism emphasized the proclaiming of the Gospel continuously highlighted the verbal transmission of the Christian message. Given the emphasis on the verbal proclamation of the Gospel within evangelical Christianity, and that the majority of chaplains identified themselves as such, it is understandable that some chaplains would define the concept in this manner. Steve Smith stated, "Evangelism is just clearly articulating the gospel to somebody, and then giving them the opportunity to respond to it. So it is not throwing a few things out or talking about politics and how God relates. It is clearly articulating the Gospel." Smith's definition was typical for this approach. Defining the term, Alastair McDaniel elaborated on the difference between evangelism and mission:

I think [of] evangelism more narrowly than mission. So, evangelism is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ [and it] has to be a proclaimed word. The message that Jesus is the King of Kings, the Son of God who was perfect, who died for our sins, who rose again, and is ascended and calls us to follow Him, worship Him. That's evangelism. That is the good news and it is a word spoken. Mission more broadly, I think, then becomes 'Well what's the implications of that message and how is it worked out at every point to show love for God, love for neighbor?' And that can be broad. […] But evangelism clearly is an exchange of a Gospel word to a person.

McDaniel mirrors the work of Bosch (1991) in his delineation of 'mission' as the living out of the Gospel message and 'evangelism' as the transmission of that message. Furthermore, McDaniel saw mission as a broader topic in which evangelism plays a role but is not its equal. The proclamation understanding of evangelism did not remove the need for relationships, but rather emphasized the understanding that to evangelize is to proclaim a specific message.

In contrast, the incarnational approach to evangelism centers on witnessing to the presence of God in a specific circumstance. This emphasis is more in line with the relational element of discipleship and mission, allowing the chaplain to be a witness of their own following of Jesus to another (see Dunlop, 2017). Furthermore, it aligns with SCUK's mantra of 'pastorally proactive, spiritually reactive' which gives relationships the priority in chaplaincy. Casey Tigers' Anthony Thomas articulated this notion in his definition:

You've got to walk through life with them. Reaching out to those who don't know Jesus and walk through life with them. And there is no greater example than through Jesus doing that. … You have heard this quote, 'Preach the Gospel at all times and if

necessary use words.' … So if you are walking through life with people there should be something about you that is different. Now I trust God and believe God that there will be moments that [those] conversations will come.

Thomas' definition prioritised relationships that lead to a proclamation-based conversation, but he does not begin with this intention. Thomas also commented that he did not feel the need to advertise the Gospel at his club because of his role as the chaplain. For him, the position of chaplain in itself served as a form of witness, as his role was specifically associated with the divine. Thomas' reflection of his position acknowledges that simply by being present, the message of Christianity may be made known. This aligns with Bosch's (1991) understanding of the *missio Dei*, which argues that God's love is made known through the presence and witness of the individual. None of the chaplains who identified with more incarnational evangelistic leanings derided proclamation-based approaches, rather there was an affirmation that evangelism may not only manifest itself via explicit verbal proclamation of the Gospel. However, previous literature has raised concerns regarding evangelism, particularly when targeted at elite athletes, as the motivation behind sports chaplaincy.

Both Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) view sports chaplaincy as a means of evangelism, and critique it heavily due to this perceived approach. These critiques were detailed in chapter one, but it is important to note that both authors saw sports chaplaincy as an avenue for individuals to leverage the power of sports to evangelize or further a chaplain's individual ministry or standing. In particular, Hoffman places his critique of sports chaplaincy in a chapter on sport and evangelism, suggesting he understood this ministry to be a subset of evangelism. Neither Hoffman or Krattenmaker's assertions were supported by qualitative data. Linville

(2016) also raises questions over the nature of evangelism in US-based sports chaplaincy. Comparing chaplaincy within the UK and US, he addresses four differences between the two contexts: i) speaking versus serving; ii) professionalism; iii) evangelism; and iv) proclamation or incarnation. Of the four differences, speaking versus serving, evangelism and proclamation emphasize the verbal proclamation of the Christian message in US sports chaplaincy. Linville contends that US-based sports chaplaincy is more focused on the proclamation and conversion of individual athletes than being an incarnational presence that emphasizes relationships and the local church. Linville states that UK-based sports chaplains tend to be more focused on being an incarnational presence within their specific ministerial context. He goes on to question the motives of chaplains, asking if their prominent place in society could be a motivating factor for this evangelism focused ministry. However, responses in this study did not emphasize decisions 'for Christ' and evangelism as primary motivators or goals of the sports chaplain, rather the intentional building of relationships with the hope of engaging the spiritual dimension of existence in these relationships was prioritized.

Irrespective of a proclamation or incarnation emphasis in their definitions of evangelism, all chaplains lived out the incarnational approach to evangelism. This goes against the writings of Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010), who would suggest that overt proselytization is a primary focus of sports chaplains. In the NFL, three of the four chaplains interviewed emphasized the importance of relationships in terms of evangelism within their host organizations. In his definition of evangelism, Anthony Thomas stressed the need to walk through life with those at the Casey Tigers. Thomas described how this could be seen through his relationship with a player of a different faith:

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I had a relationship with a player who is Muslim. Mom is Muslim, Dad is Muslim, raised in a Muslim home, yet he would come to chapel or I would go watch Monday Night Football at his house. My wife ministers to his fiancée now. We didn't, you know, shove [religion] down their throat. We just simply met them where they were, we counseled them and we were there when tears hit, right? So our heart is to live the Gospel out in front of them, and we believe God that a time and conversations will come to which that proclamation so to speak will take care of it[self]. … we just gon' love them and walk through life with them and be open to [wherever] God sees us fit to be in.

While the desire to proclaim the gospel was present, it was not the central motivating factor in Thomas' relationship with the athlete in question. This scenario is all the more significant given that the player was of another faith. This interaction demonstrates how evangelism is secondary in the broader scope of discipleship and mission, as the priority was placed on building relationship and witnessing to God's love and presence in a specific situation. Reflecting on the fear of failure in sports chaplaincy, Heskins (2006a: 189) suggests that the sports chaplain is not necessarily a problem solver within their host organization, rather they can serve as a "travelling companion within the mystery of life". He continues by stating "Perhaps our biggest failure is in not letting those [in sport] know that there are some parts of the journey that they need not make alone" (Heskins, 2006a: 189). Heskins' observation reminds those in sports chaplaincy that their value is not in evangelistic success or public acclaim. Rather, as was seen with Anthony Thomas, the priority was to be a pastoral presence, demonstrating belief and call through intentional time spent in relationship. In this, Thomas journeyed with this individual, reminding them that they were not alone in the sometimes difficult mystery called life.

The priority of pastorally serving in a specific context over evangelizing those present was also articulated by chaplains in the UK. Two of the four EPL chaplains emphasized Sports Chaplaincy UK's focus on being "pastorally proactive and spiritually reactive" at their clubs. In this, chaplains are encouraged to concentrate on being a relational presence, seeking to make connections with all, regardless of religious belief. If a person desires to speak about the spiritual realm of existence, the chaplain is there to respond to this request, as opposed to seeking interactions focused specifically on this. Chaplains who quoted this phrase affirmed the mantra, perceiving their role at the football club as primarily pastoral; however, this did not mean that opportunities to point people to a Christian worldview were absent. Speaking on this topic, Monahan explained:

> In [SCUK] training they always drum into us about being reactive to evangelistic opportunities. And I guess because I've been doing this for fifteen years, I like to feel I'm now quite attuned of when those moments come. And because I'm quite attuned, they come more often. Players will say something which may appear like a throw away and now I'll think, 'Oh hang on […] there's something in that. God could you just tell me at the right moment to have the right kind of response that it might open something up.' So, I guess that's what I mean. So, you know, on the face of it I'm there to give pastoral support. But I'm also very definitely there, personally, to try and point people towards Jesus.

Monahan's description demonstrates his desire to see people recognize the work of God and the potential impact Jesus may have on their life, but it does not do so at the expense of his relationship with that particular person. This is seen through Monahan's use of the word "might" when desiring a conversation on faith to arise. While subtle, this outlook suggests that he

recognizes that a conversation about Jesus is not a certainty or the intended goal, but the hope that such discussions may lead to further inquiry remained. Furthermore, there is a level of trust present in the relationship between Monahan and the individual which may lead to such a conversation. In their chapter on the relationship between chaplaincy and evangelism in the university context, Walters and Bradley (2018) suggest that religious conversations must be built on a relationship of trust so that others do not believe the chaplain is behaving inappropriately in seeking to promote their religious worldview. They state that this is particularly true in secular institutions where some may be uneasy regarding religious language or discussion. Monahan's approach affirms the desire for an incarnational and relational approach to chaplaincy to be central, while also being attuned to spaces in which proclaiming the faith may be acceptable.

Chaplains articulated an understanding of evangelism that supported the practice within their context, but not at the cost of larger missional, discipleship or pastoral goals. As we have seen in this incarnational approach, respect of and relationship with the other was central. The chaplain's responses and examples to questions on evangelism in their ministry affirm the power of relationship and respect in proclaiming the message of Christ, first seeking to be in relationship and service to those at their clubs while not removing the possibility of verbally proclaiming the message of the Gospel. This affirms Bosch's (1991) the notion that God is already present and working amidst circumstance, and the proclamation of God's presence and action can come in word or deed; but this is secondary to witnessing to God and serving those present. In this, chaplain's demonstrated that evangelism is an aspect of the *missio Dei*, but not it's central goal or function. While discipleship and evangelism manifest themselves in relationship, these

interactions can be difficult to establish, leading to questions of 'call' and effectiveness in ministry.

9.4 Challenges in chaplaincy

Throughout the data collection process, chaplains reiterated their desire to have intentional discipling relationships with athletes, coaches and staff at their respective clubs, whilst also acknowledging the challenges associated with maintaining these relationships. Two primary reasons surfaced to explain these challenges: first, the business and nature of elite sports, and second, the difficulty in initiating an intentional relationship in a transient environment from a position of marginality.

As previously mentioned, the EPL and NFL are two of the most prominent and profitable sports leagues in the world (Garcia, 2018). While franchise and marketing executives may emphasize the importance of entertainment and competition, Steve Smith highlighted the impact of the business side of the NFL when describing the challenges that he faced in cultivating relationships with athletes:

> What people don't realize is that professional sports is just that, it is a job, it is a business. In college you have FCA [Fellowship of Christian Athletes], and you are in a dorm, and guys are hanging out in rooms and you can do things together. … [It] ain't like that in professional football, man. You punch the clock and then you leave; half these guys, literally, don't know each other's names, they definitely don't know their [teammate's] wife and forget the kids.

Smith's comments on the business nature of professional football are crucial to understanding the challenges of cultivating relationships in elite sports settings. According to Smith, camaraderie and team bonding were not a primary focus in professional sports, rather the business of winning was key. This mentality affects the ability of the chaplain to cultivate relationships or other ministry initiatives, as they do not necessarily align with the organizational goal of winning.

Chaplains also identified the issue of time, specifically the busyness of club life in season, as an issue. Chaplains described the work schedules of athletes, coaches and staff during the season that limited the amount of time organization members spent on anything outside work. As a result of this, chaplains had to be conscious of the stress of the organization, being selective with how they engaged with individuals at the club. While many worked to cultivate relationships in the off-season this was further complicated by the fact that many athletes and coaches frequently travelled or lived away from the city where the clubs were located during this period, making the nurturing of relationships even more difficult. In addition, the transient nature of professional sports presented a series of further challenges.

Time was not only a factor with regard to the business of those within the club context, but also the limited amount of time that an athlete or coach may spend at a specific club due to high turnover of players, coaches and staff within the industry. Chaplains from both leagues identified this as a concern. Speaking on the need to capitalize on opportunities to engage with athletes, George Brown said:

> I do think I have to be aware [of opportunities to engage] because they don't come often and because a player can be here for, you know [a brief time]. We had [a] running back

brought in and he is with us for two weeks. He [was] on fire for the Lord, great guy, but then he got cut and he is gone. I mean two weeks here and then he is gone. So, I think all of us have to see the opportunities we have because we just don't know how long we have.

Brown was not the only chaplain to mention this challenge. Alastair McDaniel learned that a Premiership player who he had cultivated a relationship with had been signed to a club in continental Europe via Twitter, only getting to say goodbye to him through text message as the athlete had already left the country. Reflecting on the difficulty of maintaining relationships, McDaniel admitted:

It is one of the hardest things I think to deal with, that sort of building up relational stuff and then boom, it goes. I suppose, from the mission point of view, … it's been one of the best lessons in learning 'do you really believe in the sovereign God? [laughs] And do you also really believe, you are really not all that important in the scheme of things as a chaplain? [laughs] You do what you can and then you leave it. And you're not to have a up front role, … you're not to try and be the center of attention at all. If anything, you're a footnote that is often overlooked or not read at all.

While McDaniel expressed his thoughts in a relatively light-hearted way, his reflections on this topic are telling. The challenge of fostering relationships in a high-pressure, transient industry not only made ministry difficult but could hinder a chaplain's outlook and confidence in their work, as was the case with McDaniel.

Literature on the identity of the sports chaplain primarily focuses on the cultivation of identity (Waller, 2021) or understanding the negative effects of performance-based identity on athletes

(Jones et al, 2020; Lipe, 2020). While these sources describe how an identity is formed or warn of negative elements encroaching on the chaplain's identity, no literature has been produced on maintaining the identity of the sports chaplains when dealing with the transient and win at all costs nature of elite level sports. As seen in the examples above, chaplains desired relationships that led to discipleship, but these opportunities were relatively infrequent and faced additional challenges associated with the nature of their role and the industry in which they served. These challenges led some chaplains to feel discouraged, and further research on maintaining a healthy sense of identity is needed. However, even in these challenging circumstances, chaplains did not give up hope. Through their own personal discipleship, chaplains were reaffirmed in their call and work.

9.5 Personal discipleship

As previously noted, chaplains' definitions of discipleship consistently focused on following Jesus, personal growth and relationships. These factors were present in both personal and collective discipleship. Like collective discipleship, personal discipleship is subjective to the individual, and how it manifests is different for each person. All chaplains emphasized the importance of personal discipleship within their ministry and in their own personal identity. While personal discipleship is not discussed at length in missiological literature, Newbigin (1977) affirms the importance of personal connection to the divine.

In a message entitled, "The Hidden Life of the Pastor" Newbigin (1977, p. 140) reflects on John 15:4-8, focusing his talk on "the hidden life of the soul with God". For Newbigin, the life of the soul is characterized by the relationship between Jesus and the individual disciple. Using the

language of the vine and the branch from the aforementioned passage of scripture, Newbigin affirms that the individual cannot do anything in service to God on their own; but rather in joining with Jesus, His life flows through theirs, producing the fruit of the divine. Newbigin asserts that the connection of the vine and branch manifests itself in the disciple's abiding in Jesus Christ and remaining obedient to His teachings. Newbigin's understanding of fruit bearing identifies the personal's influence on the collective. If one abides in Jesus, they will not only remain connected to the vine but produce God's fruit that is made manifest in the world. However, maintaining this connection can be challenging for the minister.

Waller and Cottom (2016) use the image of shepherding to discuss the work of the sports chaplain. While arguing for the benefits of this pastoral worldview, they also recognize that it can be challenging for those involved in the ministry. The authors identify compassion fatigue and 'burnout' as issues that may arise when a chaplain does not take care of their own personal and spiritual needs. To avoid this, they not only suggest things such as proper diet and exercise but argue that the chaplain should participate in daily devotional practices. Identifying the connection to the divine as central to the work of the sports chaplain, they write, "For as much as creating and managing sports ministries and serving the people is tantamount, perhaps the greatest challenge to us all is not to lose sight of Christ, our sense of purpose or the people we serve" (Waller and Cottom, 2016, p. 99). Waller and Cottom recognize the dangers of losing connection with Jesus and the negative effects this may have on the ministry of the sports chaplain. For Newbigin (1977) and Waller and Cottom (2016), prioritizing personal discipleship is necessary for one to witness to God's work in the world.

When discussing the importance of personal discipleship in their ministry, chaplains articulated the need to model what they preached, particularly in engaging in a relationship with Jesus. Through email correspondence, Lewis Sherwood articulated the importance of personal discipleship, "It's fundamental to everything – how can I lead people & communicate about Jesus if I'm not walking with him on a regular basis myself!" Sherwood affirmed the importance of being prepared to practice his faith as a form of ministry, showing the value of the belief he proclaims. This same notion was articulated by Todd Dempsey of the Winburg Warriors, "If I don't love Jesus personally and have an intimate relationship with him than there is no way I will be able to convince others to love him in their lives. I find that there is more learning done by the guys when they see you loving Christ than when you tell them about loving him." Dempsey's comments mirror Newbigin's (1977) emphasis on being connected to the vine so that his ministry could bear fruit and be a witness to those he interacted with. For chaplains, their own lives and discipleship were central to their ministry in allowing their faith to be a testament to the beliefs they are preaching to others. Personal discipleship was also understood as a way in which God was engaged in the ministry of the sports chaplain.

Peter Monahan understood personal discipleship as a way in which God helped guide and lead him within his ministry at Tibsbury Rovers. This was particularly seen through his prayer life and having others pray for his work at the club:

> There is absolutely a sort of corroboration between the amount of prayer that goes on and the opportunities that I get. And the more specific I am … either in my own devotions or to the people who are praying for things, the more I see the evidence of God

at work. … Because I have to keep the eyes of my heart enlightened because otherwise

I can forget what it is that I've been, you know, through grace have received.

For Monahan, personal engagement with the divine, specifically through prayer, allowed him to better understand how God desired him to work in the club he is called to serve. Lipe (2020: 211) urges sports chaplains "to cultivate an interior life of contemplation" in which they can engage with the divine and meditate on what is occurring in their lives. This was comparable to Monahan's time of prayer, as he sought to remain focused in his ministry, not forgetting why and by whom, he was called into this work. Seeking God's guidance through personal devotion and discipleship was also reiterated by Steve Smith, "I need [God's] direction and empowerment to do the work He is calling me to do. That can only come as I am spending consistent time in His Word, in prayer, and by being consistently filled with His Spirit." For both chaplains, personal discipleship and interaction with the divine allowed them to continue providing care and ministering within their context, recognizing that the connection to divine was crucial to minister effectively. Waller and Cottom (2016: 103) contend that personal engagement with God allows chaplains to keep Jesus Christ as the central focus of their ministry, writing, "Christ must be at the very nexus of everything done in sport chaplaincy". Both Monahan and Smith embodied this notion, seeking to keep Jesus as the cornerstone of their work as sports chaplains.

Chaplains understood personal discipleship not only as a practice within a healthy ministry, but as foundational to their identity as sports chaplains. Waller and Cottom (2016: 105, original italics) conclude their work on the sports chaplain as shepherd by stating, "The great hope for sports chaplains, as shepherds and stewards of the sporting world, should not be rooted in the success or experience their ministry *per se,* but in the gospel message of Jesus Christ". At the

core of this ministry is the figure of Jesus Christ and witnessing to His message. Alastair McDaniel wrote about the importance of rooting his ministry in Jesus Christ in an email, stating that this:

> Gives me the identity, strength and reason to do the role. Any public ministry has to flow out of a living personal relationship and devotion to Jesus Christ and the mission of the Father, Son and Spirit. Without that it's hollow, social work, which does not rest on the distinctive power of God's good news which is so counter-cultural to the world of pro-Sport.

As previously discussed, McDaniel struggled with his work and the impact he was having at Oakhill FC. Nevertheless, his identity in Jesus gave him the foundation from which to continue forward in this ministry context. This is one example of how the core of the chaplain's identity and work is their understanding as disciples of Jesus Christ. Chaplains recognized that they could not complete the tasks they were called to do if they were not disciples themselves and that the spiritual nature of their work made them unique within the world of elite sport (see Gamble et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2020). McDaniel identifies the continuous connection to the vine as what is distinctive about the work of the chaplain, for without a grounding in God the chaplain loses their unique calling in the world of elite sport.

All chaplains articulated specific devotional practices completed on a regular basis. These practices are in line with Waller & Cottom (2016) and Lipe's (2020) suggestion that chaplains maintain regular spiritual disciplines. Chaplains described a mix of daily and occasional practices that benefited their discipleship. Daily practices focused on scripture reading, daily prayer guided through a book of prayers or completed extemporaneously, and reading a

devotional or religious book. Other practices described took place on a less frequent basis, but not at the exclusion of daily practices. For example, Todd Dempsey met weekly with an accountability partner to discuss one another's lives, their following of Jesus and to memorize scripture with each other. Peter Monahan described how he participated in communion at his work and attended religious conferences throughout the year as a way to gain spiritual input. It did not appear that chaplains led these communal activities, rather they were the ones who were being nourished. Given their roles as leaders in the faith community, this appears to be a central element of devotional practices for the chaplains within the study. In all the practices described the chaplains demonstrated an intentionally and consistency in making sure they are connected to the vine and maintaining a relationship with God.

Responses from those within the study affirm the notion that if one is to engage in the mission of God in society and witness to the fruit of God that is present, one must be connected back to the vine. The metaphor of the vine and the branch emphasizes the dynamic, relational nature of personal discipleship. This connection empowers the disciple to be sent out into their context to serve God and minister in community with others. It is through this continual connection to the vine that the disciple is able to affirm the presence of God that is made manifest in the *missio Dei*. The abiding and personal discipleship of chaplains is crucial not only for their personal following of Jesus, but for their role as a public witness to the *missio Dei* in their clubs. In order to be a distinctive ministerial presence in the context of the sporting world, chaplains need to continue to return back to the vine, which provides them the nourishment to go and bear fruit in the clubs they serve. Without this relationship, chaplains may run the risk of losing their foundation as a witness to the divine. The relationships so vital to ministry explained in this

chapter are made possible only through the personal relationship between the chaplain and the divine. Personal discipleship is not the only thing supporting this ministry, and it cannot be done in isolation, but it is a vital aspect of the mission and identity of the sports chaplain.

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter has articulated how chaplains understood discipleship and evangelism, both theoretically and practically. The chapter argued that discipleship and evangelism are both understood as aspects of mission that are grounded in relationships. For chaplains within the study, discipleship centered on following Jesus Christ. Chaplains sought was to provide collective discipleship within their host organizations, cultivating relationships that would help others grow in their faith or simply provide relational support. While discipleship can encapsulate elements of evangelism, this was not consistently emphasized by chaplains. Chaplains' theoretical understanding of evangelism were based in either proclamation or incarnational witness; however, this manifest itself in more incarnational and relational ways with those in their clubs. In both collective discipleship and evangelism, chaplains witnessed to the *missio Dei* through relationships within the context of their clubs. However, these relationships were often difficult to grow and maintain given the nature of the elite sport setting in which the chaplain serves. This created circumstances in which chaplains became aware of the difficulty of their position. Further research and writing is needed on supporting chaplains through these challenges, particularly in regards to identity maintenance. Even through these difficult situations, the personal discipleship of the chaplains continued to affirm their ministry and provide them with an identity as sports chaplains. Chaplains articulated how their personal discipleship pushed them to continue their witness within the context of their clubs. The focus on

personal discipleship is not to suggest that the individual is the one who begins, sustains, or is the reason for mission, rather, the continued personal discipleship affirms the Triune God as the genesis of mission, sustains the individual in the love of God through the challenges of Christian witness and allows them to be sent out to proclaim God's goodness. In this, chaplains affirmed the call of Jesus in John 15 to remain like branches connected to the vine so that they could be nourished and sustained in their public witness to the Gospel.

Throughout this work, the role of the sports chaplain in an elite sport setting has been assessed. The study has addressed both the practical and missional elements of this ministry, contending that the sports chaplain is a witness to the *missio Dei* in the performance based environment of professional sport. We now transition away from data findings derived from the study to conclusions and recommendations, both for the practical work of the sports chaplain and the academic discipline which studies it.

Chapter Ten:

Conclusion

10.0 Introduction

This study sought to understand the ministry of sports chaplains and how it manifests in elite sports within different geographic locations. In doing so it desired to not only shed light on how sports chaplains function within these settings, but also demonstrate that the sports chaplain is a witness to the *missio Dei* within their host organizations. Other authors (Ballard, 2009; Dunlop, 2017; Slater, 2015; Todd et al., 2014; Todd, 2018) have spoken of the missional potential of chaplaincy as a whole, but not specifically identified the sports chaplain as an agent of God's mission. Discourse on this subject matter is also lacking in the sport and religion interface. Literature on the interaction between sport and religion, which focuses predominately on western Christianity's relationship with sport, addresses sport chaplaincy within its historical context (Baker, 2007; Ladd and Mathisen, 1999) or as a part of a wider critique on how evangelical Christians approach and appropriate sport (Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010). While the subfield of sports chaplaincy specific literature has grown in the previous two decades, more research and theoretical publications are needed to adequately understand the field and enhance the work of practitioners. The chapter will begin by restating various findings from the study before acknowledging the limitations of the project. It will then address the overall conclusions of this research, and provide recommendations for future research as well as practical areas of that need to be addressed for sports chaplaincy to thrive.

10.1 Summary of approach and findings

Adopting a constructionist and interpretivist approach, this cross-cultural study sought to assess the work of sports chaplains within the NFL and the EPL, two of the wealthiest and powerful professional sporting competitions in the world (Garcia, 2018). In total, eight participants, four from each competition, took part in a series of semi-structured interviews over the course of a season. Specific areas of inquiry included the roles chaplains fulfilled, their educational and professional backgrounds, theological understanding of their work, accountability structures to evaluate the chaplain and their ongoing professional development. Given constraints surrounding distance, the majority of interviews took place via telephone and Skype. During the research process, three participant observations took place, two in the EPL and on in the NFL. Data from the research demonstrated that participants completed similar roles and used comparable skills to chaplains within other settings, such as healthcare, prisons, and education, amongst others. These roles and skills can be categorized in three groups, which align with Newitt (2011) and Paget and McCormick's (2006) assessment on the roles of the chaplain.

First, chaplains completed religious duties typically associated with a parish minister, such as leading worship and Bible study, praying with those in their organization and completing occasional offices such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. The data collected showed that NFL chaplains were asked to complete these duties explicitly, with worship and Bible study leadership being the central tasks assigned by the host organization. While EPL chaplains completed some of these duties, there were less explicit opportunities or requests from host organizations, as well as their constituents, for religious services when compared to NFL chaplains. Second, chaplains provided pastoral care for those within the host organization,

primarily demonstrated through relational opportunities during a time of loss for the individual in the organization. Throughout the interview process, chaplains described the importance of these interactions and their ability to positively affect an individual or situation. The centrality of pastoral care in the sports chaplain's work affirmed previous literature in the field which argued that pastoral care was a key task in this field (Ferrin, 2008; Gamble et al., 2013; Johnson, 2008; Jones et al., 2020; Kelber, 2009; Kenney, 2016; King et al., 2020; Lipe, 2006; Maranise, 2016; Oliver and Parker, 2019; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008; Waller & Cottom, 2016). Finally, chaplains responded to and served the needs of those within their host organization. Chaplains in the study provided examples of discerning how their presence could benefit a situation or individual, understanding how they could be either a help or a hindrance to the host organization. This required chaplains to be constantly assessing their interactions and how they engaged with members of the club. All of these roles and skills were contextual, and how they were manifested in the ministry of the chaplain was dependent on the host organization they served. Chaplains also had to negotiate the expectations and access put forward by their host organization.

It is necessary to pair the roles and skills of the chaplain with an understanding of the expectations and access provided by the host organization. One cannot fully understand the role a chaplain plays without assessing how the individual functions within a specific context. Overall, chaplains had few formal expectations from their host organizations and access varied widely between individual clubs. For example, Todd Dempsey was a part-time employee of the Winburg Warriors while Duncan Murray had been intentionally excluded by the first team manager of Kinsford City. Murray's experience with the first team manager emphasized the

importance of the chaplain-manager interaction. Chaplains in the study affirmed previous work that argued that the head coach or other upper executives are gatekeepers that can increase or decrease the chaplain's access and ability to minister (Ferrin, 2008; Gamble et al., 2013; Lipe, 2020; Roe & Parker, 2016; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010). The data consistently demonstrated that how an organization approached the role of the chaplain had implications for the chaplain's work within that entity. While expectations from the host organization and good access to that entity were seen as beneficial, all chaplains felt some form of marginalization within their club. This, in turn, was connected to the liminal nature of the chaplain's work.

The understanding of liminality, which was closely related to the sense of marginality respondent's expressed, is developed from the work of Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969). Turner (1969) argues that all societies oscillate between two poles, structure, where hierarchical status and social norms are strictly adhered to, and communitas, marked by relational equality between members of different societal groups. It is the task of liminal entities to help bring about the transition from structure to communitas. These liminal entities are marginal within the society at large, but can bring relational equality at various times. According to Pattison (2015), chaplaincy is inherently marginal because the chaplain is, by nature, not focused on the central task of the host organization. Chaplains discussed their marginality by describing circumstances in which they were not welcome within the organization or had to keep a low-profile as not to be a distraction for others within the club. Even chaplains with good access and rapport with members of the organization understood that their position could be terminated if they caused issues within the structure of the team. While this was a challenge for many, it also provided opportunities to help support the club and bring about communitas. Peter Monahan was given the

opportunity to act as a mediator between athletes and upper management at Tibsbury Rovers when disagreements arose between the parties. As he was a marginal presence not aligned with a specific group in the organization he could act as a neutral intercessor between the two groups. In this example, Monahan's liminality was a positive, affirming Pattison's (2015) contention that marginality is a benefit for chaplains. However, the chapter suggested that emphasizing the liminal nature of the work, in an effort to understand the chaplain's marginality, utilizes language that is empowering.

Throughout data collection, it became apparent that chaplains did not have consistent evaluations, safeguarding training or professional development requirements. In all these areas, chaplains had to be proactive in engaging with others. Their host organizations provided minimal to no requirements in these three areas and their sending bodies requirements varied. Para-church organizations worked to provide effective evaluation and training, but recognized that more accountability from host organizations would be beneficial. Self-appraisal tended be reflexive but did not include reflection on the missional call of the chaplain. While EPL chaplains underwent safeguarding measures through their host organization and SCUK, NFL chaplains had little to no safeguarding training. This is problematic for NFL chaplains as safeguarding does not only address the appropriate care of vulnerable groups, but also helps protect the chaplain against accusation. No league had minimum requirements for the chaplain in terms of training, safeguarding or continued accountability. Overall, the data suggests that there are major areas for improvement in relation to the sports chaplain's accountability structures and continued training. This issue has also been identified by Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2010) and Waller, Dzikus, Hardin and Bemiller (2016) and their call for a sports chaplaincy governing body which,

amongst other things, could establish basic measures of training and accountability. One area in chaplains were in full agreement on was the importance of discipleship within their ministry.

While no one definition of discipleship was provided by all of the chaplains, three elements were consistently present within the definitions articulated. First, chaplains consistently focused on engagement with Jesus Christ. For one to be a disciple, a person must engage with the divine on a consistent basis (Bonhoeffer, 1995). The centrality of Christ was paired with the growth and development inherent in following another, be that Jesus, another Christian or both. This growth was seen in the context of developed and long-standing relationships. Overall, definitions contained both collective and personal understandings of discipleship. In this, one is both a disciple of Christ and being discipled by, or discipling, an individual. For chaplains, discipleship involved a level of programing and leading those who were not as established in their faith. While these definitions emphasized the growth of individuals, none suggested that discipleship was solely for the individual and their own development. Although evangelism and multiplication were important for some in discipleship, this was not the case for all. However, those who emphasized multiplication focused on the importance of witnessing to their faith and encouraging others to do likewise. Central to the chaplain's witness and continued ministry was their personal discipleship. Chaplains described their own connection to Jesus Christ as the core of their ministry and without this connection they believed that they could not minister effectively. Chaplains aligned with Newbigin's (1977) metaphor of the branch and the vine when detailing the importance of this connectivity, emphasizing how they were nourished by God just as the branch is nourished by the vine. While discipleship is never a solely individual task, chaplains demonstrated the centrality of personal discipleship within the life of a chaplain in elite

sports. Overall, chaplain's witnessed to the *missio Dei* in their organization by affirming the inherent love and dignity of all people, regardless of their athletic achievement or ability. This missional approach runs counter to the performance-based identity that is predominant in elite sports (see Jones et al., 2020; Lipe, 2020). Although the study provided valuable data on the experience of the sports chaplain in elite sports, it was not without its limitations.

10.2 Limitations of the research

While this research was the first of its kind, a variety of challenges arose during the process that limited the study. One limitation was the number of participants. While an adequate sample size for a closed setting (see Adler and Adler, 2012), more research participants would have provided further depth to the data and study overall. In acquiring research subjects, the researcher initially struggled to find an equal number of participants in each league. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, NFL chaplains were reluctant to take part in the study for various reasons. This was not the case in the EPL. More EPL participants could have been recruited, and potentially taken part, but this would have come at the cost of a balance between participants from each league. Furthermore, including interviews with members of the host organization regarding the role of the chaplain within the club would have been beneficial for the study. Given this, it may be helpful for future researchers to seek interviews with members of the host organization or the league offices to gain their perspective on chaplaincy. However, given the marginal nature of chaplaincy and the closed nature of elite sports organizations this would have been difficult to complete. The challenges of engaging with members of the organization also extended to a lack of observation. While the researcher was able to complete three observations, more opportunities to collect this type of data would have been valuable. Even though enquiries

were made about observation with numerous chaplains, the majority of research subjects were not comfortable with this type of data collection due to potential issues this may have caused with members of the organization. Finally, some data had to be collected via e-mail. Even though this was not ideal, it was necessary to acquire data with certain participants. In this, it was decided that data collected via e-mail was better than no data. While these elements limited the research findings, the study gained valuable information on the work of the chaplain within an elite sports setting and provided a significant contribution to the existing literature in the field. After providing an overall summary of the work and the limitations of the research it is now time to address general conclusions of the study.

10.3 Conclusions of the study

Overall, the research found that sports chaplains in elite sports settings live out their faith incarnationally through seeking and fostering relationships. Within in their host organizations, chaplains worked from a position of marginality and used this standing to serve and engage with members of their club. Furthermore, it demonstrated that this building of relationships can be seen through a missional lens, as way to witness to the *missio Dei* and God's love. Previous literature (Deford, 1976; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010; Linville, 2016) has argued that US based chaplaincy is more focused on the proclamation of the Gospel message, while UK sports chaplaincy is incarnational, emphasizing relationships and engagements with members of their club. While it has been suggested that the root cause of this difference lies in the different approaches to religion in the two locations, the roles that chaplains are asked to fulfill have not been assessed in this dichotomy. US sports chaplains are asked to provide religious services that are explicitly Christian, such as worship and Bible study, more often than UK based chaplains.

As a result of this, they are given spaces within their host organizations to speak from a more Christo-centric and faith-based position. On the other hand, UK based sports chaplains are explicitly told by SCUK to be "pastorally proactive and spiritually reactive". In this, they are required to prioritize incarnational relationships over the proclamation of a specific religious viewpoint. These expectations from host organizations and para-church organizations place the chaplain in a specific category from the offset, limiting the approach of the individual. However, this split between proclamation and incarnation was not seen in the research and almost all chaplains lived out an incarnational approach within their host organization.

Even though chaplains in the study emphasized their desire to see people within their host organization engage with the Christian faith, research participants in both leagues tended to prioritize creating relationships over the proclamation of the Gospel. This goes against the arguments of Hoffman (2010) and Krattenmaker (2010) who contend that evangelism are the central focus of US-based sports chaplains. Respondents who did emphasize the importance of proclaiming the Gospel and sought opportunities for evangelism recognized that overt proselytizing within their host organization would not be well received. Throughout the study, chaplains provided examples of living out their faith and call through relational encounters with people of Christian faith, different religious traditions or none at all. In this, the majority of chaplains lived an incarnational form of ministry by being present to engage and serve those within their host organization. This affirms previous literature that contends that chaplaincy is incarnational and relational (Dunlop, 2017; Holm, 2009; Todd, 2018; Todd et al., 2014). This theme has not been addressed in sport chaplaincy literature, although Waller and Cottom's (2016) argument for the shepherd as a model for sports chaplains has similar emphasis. In their

responses, chaplains demonstrated the power of the incarnational relationship with people from different levels of club structure. From Lewis Sherwood's relationship with the first team manager to Alastair McDaniel's consoling a staff member who did not come into the club often, chaplains were given the opportunity to witness to their faith most often in relationship with others. While Bible studies and worship services were valuable and important times, they were not spoken about with the same intentionality or power by chaplains. Chaplains were most engaged and in tune with their calling to serve when they were in relationship with others, embodying their faith as a form of witness. These moments of engagement and relationship were at their most powerful when the chaplain was tasked with using their liminality to bring about communitas in the structure of an elite sports organization.

The liminality of the position allowed for individuals to engage with members of the organization in manner not possible within the traditional structure of the club. Chaplains demonstrated how their marginality provided them avenues to serve the organization, particularly during challenging periods. While this affirmed the work of Pattison (2015) there was also a conundrum present in the marginality of the chaplain that Pattison does not identify. Some chaplains within the study were so marginal within their organization that they were overlooked by members of the organization. For example, Duncan Murray was not asked by his club to assist in the spreading of ashes at the team's stadium, a role typically assigned to the chaplain. Anthony Thomas received no support from upper management and was not able to establish relationships with a wide range of staff within the organization, therefore making it challenging for him to serve the entire club. While liminality is, overall, a benefit, there is also a threshold in which the chaplain's marginality may hinder their work. The question is not whether

the chaplain is a marginal entity within an elite sports organization, they are. Rather, at what point is the marginality of the chaplain a detriment to their ministry as opposed to an opportunity? While this question cannot be answered fully in this study, it does warrant further consideration. Furthermore, while recognizing the marginal position of the chaplain may confirm the individual's perception of their place within a specific context, it is not necessarily affirming or empowering to focus solely on the marginality of the chaplain. While important to recognize, the liminal nature of the chaplain's work provides a springboard for future engagement which can empower the individual to use their position positively within their host organization. Using their liminality to bring about communitas and the desire to foster relationships through incarnational witness provided chaplains a missional opportunity, whereas emphasizing marginality may not be as enabling. Chaplains can use this liminal position to witness to the *missio Dei* within their community

In a world where sport continues to be a dominant presence in society, chaplaincy is vital connection point between the church and elite sport. Sport chaplaincy provides the witnessing community the opportunity to affirm the love and care of God for all in a hierarchical, results-based structure that affirms a performance-based identity (Jones et. al, 2020). This missional outreach reminds those within this section of society that God is present and alive even in this space. Chaplains within the study sought to encourage and support those within their organization not because of their value on the field, but because they were valued by God. In doing so they acknowledged the continuing presence of God within the world of sport, embodying the *missio Dei* within the context they have been called to serve. This is only made possible as long as the chaplain remains connected to God, who has called the individual to this

work. In personal discipleship the chaplain is not only sustained and supported in their ministry, but models the same relationship they desire others to have with the divine. In serving sport, the sports chaplain lives out Ballard's (2009) call to see the role of chaplain as a way in which the Christian community can continue to serve a fragmented society. To continue to serve this sector of society, chaplains will need to strong lines of accountability and further training.

Throughout the previous literature (Oliver & Parker, 2019; Waller, Dzikus & Hardin, 2008, 2010; Waller, Dzikus Hardin, & Bemiller, 2016) and the data collected within the study it is clear that more training is needed for sports chaplains in elite sports settings. Chaplains in the study demonstrated a lack of chaplaincy specific training, contradicting the work of Maranise (2016), formal evaluation, and did not complete consistent professional development that focused on sports chaplaincy. Furthermore, standards surrounding safeguarding were not present in the US, raising concerns around the safety of chaplains and those they interact with. While para-church organizations required some specific training, they did not have consistent professional development standards or curriculum modules. Overall, chaplains were responsible for their own accountability and training, with few internal or external standards of evaluation. Basic standards of training and accountability would help professionalize the field, give credibility to the position and ensure standards of care. The task of providing these measures, and the needed training that would ensue, should not only be the responsibility of the individual chaplains or their sending bodies, but also must come from host organizations and the professional leagues they compete in. It is ironic that elite sports have high standards for athletes, coaches and other members of staff, yet have no benchmarks for sports chaplains who serve their teams, including clear reporting structures for those chaplains if issues arise. If these entities

desire high caliber individuals to perform in other roles within their leagues, and there are standards kept to ensure that this occurs with other positions, there should be no exception for the chaplain. The need for development in training and accountability for sports chaplains is one of the various recommendations, both in terms of future research and for practitioners, that come forth from this study.

10.4 Future research considerations

A variety of areas warrant further research within the field of sports chaplaincy. More research is needed into the accountability structures and training of sports chaplains. First, theoretical writing and research is needed on what safeguarding means in the context of US sports. Hemmings et al. (2019a) describe the various measures taken by sporting and government bodies in the UK to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all who engage in activities with these organizations. These policies and procedures have not only required chaplains to be trained in safeguarding measures, but have created opportunities for chaplains to be involved in the holistic support of those within their club. US sports chaplaincy not only needs analysis on what safeguarding means in the US context but also training for practitioners that stems from such research. This is even more pertinent in light of the Baylor University football scandal and the role the team chaplain played within the case. Safeguarding not only refers to the protection of vulnerable populations, but helps the individual in relation to accusations or abuse they receive. As previously referenced, Todd Dempsey felt that a safeguarding procedure could help a chaplain if they were pressured to break confidentiality. Understanding how safeguarding may manifest itself in US sport could help reduce concerns like the one addressed by Dempsey and require chaplains to come forth with allegations of abuse.

As there is no precedent in US sport for safeguarding measures for chaplains, it will be necessary to analyze how other fields of chaplaincy within the United States have addressed the issue of safeguarding. Learning from military, prison, hospital and other forms of chaplaincy can aid US sports chaplaincy in setting benchmarks that ensure the safety of all parties involved. Furthermore, US sports chaplains must look abroad, particularly to the UK, and learn from groups such as SCUK who emphasize safeguarding training for all their chaplains. While the context may be different, overarching principles and dialogue can help raise safeguarding standards in the US and strength chaplaincy in both nations. Future researchers should consider requesting access to specific safeguarding policies and reporting structures utilized by para-church and host organizations and seek to understand where the chaplain fits into these plans and how well the individual chaplain's understand these procedures. Another area in need of analysis and assessment is how chaplains understand their identity as a member of a specific Christian group, particularly evangelical Christians, and how this distinction influences the chaplain's approach to their work. While this has been briefly alluded to in the study, more could be done to better understand the influence this has on the ethos of the chaplain's ministry.

Future research is also needed on training methods used by sports chaplains. Understanding how chaplains are currently trained will assist in identifying areas where improvement is needed to aid in development and professionalization. This includes training requirements of para-church organizations or other sending bodies and degree programs in sports chaplaincy. In relation to sending bodies, more information is needed on how new chaplains are trained and what requirements are put in place for professional development; including frequency of training and

required subject matter. No research has been completed on the requirements of degree programs in sports chaplaincy. Understanding who participates in these programs, be it current practitioners or those desiring to go into chaplaincy, and the professional options for those who have graduated with said degrees would help understand their efficacy. In researching sports chaplaincy degree programs, it is necessary to assess how these programs compare with other chaplaincy degrees in content and rigor, including the requirement of CPE. Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2010) and Waller (2021) identify the lack of CPE completed by sports chaplains as one area of training that separates sports chaplains from others in the field. Assessing current training will help recognize areas of growth for sports chaplaincy and identify potential improvements to assist sports chaplaincy in becoming more professional. Research is also needed on how professional leagues, other elite sports competitions and host organizations understand the role of the chaplain.

As previously stated, one limitation in the current study was the lack of engagement with officials within host organizations and the corporate offices of the NFL and EPL. Completing research with executive leadership in these areas would allow for greater understanding regarding how those within leadership positions perceive the work of the chaplain within an elite sport setting. Future researchers would benefit from asking host organizations what their expectations are for the chaplain and how they perceive the work of the chaplain within their club. The field would also benefit from comparative studies involving chaplains in other areas of the field that tend to be full-time professional positions, such as hospitals or military chaplains. In doing this, it would be possible to assess how the roles of sports chaplains compare with more professional and well-established areas of chaplaincy and evaluate how sports chaplaincy can

continue to develop. This affirms the recommendations of Waller, Dzikus and Hardin (2008, 2010), who call for sports chaplaincy to learn from and engage with other forms of chaplaincy as a way of professionalizing the field. Furthermore, this study only assessed chaplaincy within two elite sports settings. Future research studies should focus on how chaplaincy is present in other elite and non-elite sports settings. These studies should not only assess the role of the chaplain in these environments, but also analyze specific areas of emphasis present in their specific context. For example, a study that focuses on sports chaplaincy in professional motorsports must address how chaplains understand and approach the mortal danger present in auto racing. Finally, more theological reflection is needed on sports chaplaincy, and sport in general. A robust theological foundation not only provides credibility to the field but demonstrates that sport is filled with God's love and goodness. Based on the research, and the experience of the researcher, we may conclude that there is further theological reflection could aide the work of chaplains, providing a robust theological framework for their ministry. A case in point, in this respect, is how the relational nature of the *missio Trinitatis* might positively influence the understanding of the chaplain as a conveyor of *communitas*. If we understand the Triune God as a being that is in relational equality with the three elements of itself, further reflection on the parity of the divine may help shape how chaplains understand the facilitation of *communitas*. Alongside recommendations for future research there are also recommendations for practitioners and policy makers.

10.5 Future considerations for practitioners

Similar to recommended future research in the academic field, there is need to establish clear standards of practice regarding safeguarding and training for sports chaplains. This is not only a

task for para-church organizations, but also for professional leagues or other sports organizations. The NFL, along with other governing bodies in sport, would benefit from a rigorous safeguarding protocol comparable to that of the FA which has policies, protocols, training procedures and reporting structures (Football Association, 2021). These measures must be both preventative, in offering trainings, maintaining safeguarding procedures and promoting awareness of issues, as well as responsive, offering confidential reporting mechanisms and swift investigative procedures. A governing body for sports chaplaincy, as called for by various authors (Dzikus, Hardin & Waller, 2012; Waller, Dzikus, & Hardin, 2008, 2010; Waller Dzikus, Hardin & Bemiller, 2016), could help lead this charge, showing their support for these types of initiatives (see Oliver and Parker, 2019). Establishing a governing body would also have benefits for sports chaplaincy specifically, such as producing norms for the field, setting criteria for training and assessing or certifying sports chaplains. However, there are various challenges associated with this task, as there is a wide range of theological viewpoints, geographic contexts and personal motives within sports chaplaincy. As a result of this, consensus is not something that will be easily reached. However, for sports chaplaincy to continue to grow and develop as a missional opportunity, common ground will need to be found so that chaplains can support one another in their witness and ministry. Shared language in terms of best practices, accountability and safeguarding will allow chaplains to be well positioned and supported within their individual contexts. Practitioners also need to recognize the importance of training and accountability.

Be it individual or communal, chaplains should be involved in ongoing training that is specific to chaplaincy. Whether through conferences, dialogue with fellow chaplains or formal training such as advanced degrees or programs such as CPE, continued development should be a priority for

practitioners. Committing to consistent professional development and training is not just another thing to do on an already busy schedule, but a continued commitment to a specific ministry and those who are served by it. To help improve sports chaplaincy training, para-church organizations and chaplains should seek ways to engage with academic institutions studying sports chaplaincy, allowing for the expertise of the academy to help shape and support practitioners. Particularly in the US, the connection between the academy and respondents was not consistent and this divide hinders both sides. Both parties can learn from each other and support one another in their work, further strengthening the practical emphasis on ministry, and the research and theoretical understanding of the field. Furthermore, formal links should be established with groups like ACPE, allowing sports chaplains to receive this kind of training within a sporting context.

Chaplains are also encouraged to seek out accountability within host organizations and through sending bodies. As Sedgwick (2015) stated, chaplains are accountable to multiple bodies and must be in dialogue with these entities to ensure they are being held accountable for their work. While accountability may be challenging from host organizations, as was demonstrated in the study, chaplains can seek out others in the field for dialogue and discourse as a form of support and accountability, just as Peter Monahan did with a local bishop. Finally, practitioners in sports chaplaincy and those in sports chaplaincy degree programs should consider undergoing CPE training and receiving board certification in chaplaincy. This process provides the chaplain with a level of professionalization and credibility that demonstrates their commitment and expertise within the field.

A final recommendation is for sports chaplains to articulate the missional potential of sports chaplaincy and embrace this as an opportunity to be witnesses to the *missio Dei.* In a world that continues to evolve, chaplaincy is a viable and vital form of ministry for the Christian community. Sports chaplains engage with a crucial element of western society, witnessing to God's presence in a space not often associated with the religious or spiritual. In sport, individuals or teams are often judged based on their ability or success in a competition. Chaplains are given the opportunity to affirm the inherent value given to all by God, speaking against the performance-based mindset of elite sports that defines value only through results. By articulating how the *missio Dei* is manifest with in their context, chaplains affirm the presence of God within their circumstance, empower themselves by naming their call and can assess future opportunities to witness to the divine. This type of reflection may require chaplains to complete further reading and development in missiology, but should be viewed as an opportunity to name and articulate their missional call in a specific context.

10.6 Concluding Remarks

In serving elite level sport, chaplains can use their liminality to speak words of truth and affirm the presence of the divine in a specific situation. In doing so, the chaplain aligns themselves with the *missio Dei* and witnesses to the Creator of all, who does not dwell in the structures of society that separates individuals, but who is present in love freely given to all in relational equality and communitas. To embrace this notion is to embrace the call of Jesus and follow, allowing oneself to witness to God's love through service to the world of elite sport.

Appendix One:

Biographies of Sports Chaplains

National Football League

Todd Dempsey- Winburg Warriors

Todd Dempsey was the chaplain for the Winburg Warriors. While the Warriors had been successful in the past, the team had struggled in recent seasons. In his second season as team chaplain, Dempsey also served as an associate pastor at a local church. A previous NFL player, Dempsey was raised in a nominally Roman Catholic home. He became more religious while in the NFL, identifying as Protestant after this time. Dempsey attended seminary after his NFL career was over, and is an ordained member of a conservative, mainline denomination. He became the Winburg Warriors chaplain after helping at an event for the team, and the Warriors were the only NFL chaplaincy position he had held. Dempsey was the only chaplain in the study who was employed by the team, and this was on a part-time basis. His contract with the team also required him to help with rookie orientation to the NFL, aiding first year players in their transition into the league. During the research, Dempsey and his wife had a young family with four children.

Anthony Thomas- Casey Tigers

Anthony Thomas was on staff at Athletes in Action and in his fourth season as chaplain to the Casey Tigers. While he had assisted another NFL chaplain in a different town, the Tigers were the only team that Thomas had served as a chaplain for. The Casey Tigers are located in a small market, but had made the playoffs the previous five seasons. Thomas was not raised as a Christian, and converted in his late teens. Thomas received a bachelor's degree in sports

recreation, a Masters degree in organizational leadership and was ordained in a non-denominational church. As a staff member at Athletes in Action, he and his wife fundraised their salary and considered themselves missionaries to the Casey Tigers. While Thomas preached at various churches, being the volunteer chaplain to the Tigers was his primary occupation. Thomas' wife was also active in this ministry, leading Bible study for the wives and girlfriends of the Tigers athletes and coaches.

George Brown- Martinsville Power

George Brown had been working with the Martinsville Power in some capacity for thirteen years. Before moving back to Martinsville to be the lead pastor at a local church, Brown would assist with away game chapels when the Power would play near his home. Upon returning to Martinsville, he began to work with their previous chaplain whom he took over for upon his departure from the club. Brown is not the only chaplain at the club as a Catholic priest also serves the team. The Martinsville Power are a small-market team, deeply embedded in the community. They have experienced historic and recent success, thanks, in part, to a number of big name players. Brown has served in a variety of non-denominational churches throughout the country. He holds a Masters in Christian Education from an evangelical Christian university.

Steve Smith- Ely Eagles

In his twenty-fifth year as chaplain to the Ely Eagles, Steve Smith was one of the longest tenured staff members at the club (although he is technically a volunteer). While Smith's family attended a Methodist church in his youth, he states that he was "saved" while playing minor league baseball. Smith served on a college campus as a sports chaplain for three years before moving to

Ely to work with the Eagles. He had also been the chaplain for Ely's professional baseball team when he first moved to the town, serving both teams for four years before focusing exclusively on the Eagles. Smith received a bachelors degree in business and had not pursued any formal theological degree. He has been on staff with Athletes in Action for his entire career, and fundraised his salary. The Ely Eagles had periods of success over their history, but, overall, struggled within the NFL. At the time of the interviews, they had losing seasons seven of the previous ten years.

English Premier League

Lewis Sherwood- Wimfield United

Lewis Sherwood was in his tenth season as the chaplain for Wimfield United. An ordained priest in the Church of England, Sherwood's primary role was as a local parish priest. He had served as chaplain to a Premier League club for five years at his previous parish. Wimfield United was in the lower leagues of English professional football when he arrived at the club, and Sherwood had been a constant presence at the club throughout their promotion through various divisions. Even though the club was in the Premier League, it was still considered a smaller club that was overachieving for a club of its size. Sherwood had grown up in a religious household, and his father was a vicar. As a teenager, he desired to go into ministry and studied theology at university before receiving further training for ministry.

Alastair McDaniel- Oakhill FC

Alastair McDaniel served as the chaplain to Oakhill FC. In his fourth full season as team chaplain, Oakhill FC was the only club McDaniel had worked with. Since joining Oakhill FC,

the club had been purchased and received substantial investment, and the on-field results of the club had improved. An ordained minister in the Church of England, McDaniel's primary work was as a chaplain to the local community. Previously he had served within a parish for six years, focusing on evangelism and church plant initiatives. McDaniel's grew up going to church and became more conservative in his faith after attending a conservative seminary.

Peter Monahan- Tibsury Rover

Peter Monahan has served as the chaplain of Tibsury Rovers for seven seasons. Tibsury Rovers is the second club Monahan has served at, being with his previous club for four seasons. Tibsury Rovers was a smaller club that had been promoted from the lower divisions of English football to the Premier League. In the seven years since Monahan began, the club has been in a constant state of flux with five managers during that period. Monahan became a Christian as a teenager, worshipping in various independent churches before being ordained in the Church of England. Monahan served in a variety of roles for the denomination that require him to travel internationally and promote various ministry initiatives. Monahan earned a Masters of Social Work alongside a theological degree and a Masters in Sport and Pastoral Care.

Duncan Murray- Kinsford City

Duncan Murray has served as the Kinsford City chaplain for twelve seasons, and it is the only club he has worked with in this capacity. While being located on the outskirts of a major metropolitan town, Kinsford City is a smaller club who had moved through the lower divisions of English football to reach the Premier League. The club is connected with the community and this has been seen as an important element in their identity. Murray converted to Christianity in

his twenties, and had been working in full-time ministry for almost twenty years. At the time of the interviews, Murray was a pastor at an independent church, focusing on outreach to the wider community. Murray had studied music at university, and had not received a degree in theology. He had completed a Masters in Sport and Pastoral Care from the University of Gloucestershire. He was not ordained, but had hands laid on him to signify his position in ministry over a decade before.

Appendix Two:

Field Observations from Steve Smith

I met Steve Smith in the parking lot of a chain restaurant about fifteen minutes from the team's training facility on a Saturday night before the last chapel service of the season. Steve drove us to the facility. From the front, it resembled a corporate office building and was as quiet and dark as an office building would be on any given Saturday at seven in the evening. Upon entering the facility, we dropped off supplies, including Steve's notes for his sermon and box of off-season spiritual training plans Steve had created for the athletes that mimicked an off-season strength and weight program, in a room used typically for the team's defense specific meetings where chapel took place each week. The team would have their pre-game meetings in the facility before heading to a hotel for the night. After a brief tour of the facility, Steve prepared for chapel. As Steve and I sat in the room he spoke intermittently to me, conveying his frustration about the player's lack of desire for intentional spiritual growth. He concluded by saying that while he felt called to this work and enjoyed it, that "pro ministry is not as glamorous as everyone thinks." The service was set to begin at seven-thirty and would have to end before eight when position meetings began. The first person arrived about ten minutes before the service was due to start, with the majority of the twenty-one coaches and players that attended arriving within five minutes of chapel beginning. In total, nine coaches or staff and twelve athletes were present. All in attendance were men. Of these, participants 15 were African Americans and six were White. The service began promptly at seven-thirty with prayer, followed by Steve's message. He preached from notes, weaving elements from the book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey into his talk. Those in attendance were focused on the message, with almost all present reading from their own Bibles and/or taking notes while Steve spoke. Steve

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would later tell me that he was frustrated about lack of player attendance at chapel and had questions about his own speaking, as he wasn't fully satisfied with his message because he felt that he had spoken for too long and forgot a prop he wanted to use in his message. Given the specific time constraints of the chapel service, going long is a major concern of the NFL chaplain. The chapel service ended a few minutes before eight. As the coaches and players departed for meetings, many came up front and shook Steve's hand and numerous men introduced themselves to me. We departed the facility at 8:20 after a discussion with the Player Personnel Coordinator, who had also been at the chapel service. As we drove back to the restaurant and during our time there, Steve spoke about his pre-game routine, his engagement with the players and his presence at various funerals that had occurred throughout the year.

Appendix Three:

Field Observations from Lewis Sherwood

It was one of those cold, dark, UK January nights where the darkness seems to stick to you as you walk. I had taken the bus out of town and first saw the stadium through the trees of the adjacent park. The floodlights broke through the darkness, beckoning those nearby to come closer. The plan had been for us to meet pre-match and complete an interview before accompanying Sherwood during his pre-match routine. A mix up on my part meant Lewis and I did not have time to complete our second interview before the match began. Furthermore, he was excited and it was clear he was more interested in getting to the tunnel in the stadium than answering my questions. As we walked into the stadium, we headed toward the tunnel via the touchline. As we walked, he told me about his typical match day routine: arrive about 6pm for a 7:45pm or 8pm kickoff. Typically, pre-game prayer occurs around 6:15, an hour and a half before kickoff, and this is on the pre-match schedule. During this time, Lewis offers a brief message to the players and coaches before praying with them. The word for this match was rest. However, this matchday would be different as things did not go as planned. Upon arriving at the tunnel, Sherwood was ushered through without anyone checking his badge; they couldn't have checked if they had wanted to because he doesn't have one. Once in the tunnel, he spoke with the media communications director, and other members of staff, including security and other matchday workers, engaging with them personally. These were not surface level conversations or small talk, rather, it was clear that Sherwood had genuine relationships with these individuals that had been built over time.

As players entered the facility he shook their hand and greeted them, intentionally positioning himself so that players would easily see him when walking by. He went into the training room and spoke with the sports science staff, walking around the training room and locker room freely. As the players entered the stadium they seemed focused and ready to begin their work day; all except one. When one player came in, an outspoken Christian, they were distressed. Issues outside of his control meant that he would not be playing in the match. This was unexpected and the player was visibly upset. His inability to play resulted in the lineup being changed. Sherwood spoke with the player, telling him to trust God and give it to Him, something he felt he could do because of the professed belief of the player. Due to this issue, there was no pre-match prayer with players. However, the coach called Sherwood and myself into his room off the main hallway and asked Sherwood to pray with him. The manager was honest with Sherwood about how he was feeling, not appearing to place a façade over his emotions. Similar to conversations with staff, the tenor and nature of their comments demonstrated the genuine nature of their relationship. After a brief conversation, Sherwood suggested we pray. The three of us stood together, hands on each other's back, heads bowed, in silence until Sherwood began to speak. The prayer was brief, and focused on the match, the player's and manager's decision-making, and peace for the manager. It was apparent that the manager was appreciative of this brief time, and thanked Lewis before shaking our hands as we departed.

After this, Lewis went straight for the locker room, asking me to stay out in the tunnel. About five minutes later he came back out and we departed the tunnel area. In all, we had spent roughly an hour in the space, Lewis interacting on a first name basis with almost all the home squad staff. From the tunnel, we headed up to the hospitality suites. I tried to keep up as Lewis went around,

stopping at random intervals to speak with people. A brief conversation at the hospitality desk with a young man is followed by a longer discussion with the club's technical director on the stairs. Jumping between lounges, Lewis comments that much of his time is spent simply mingling, with little plan after the pre-match prayer. Finally, Lewis led me to another lounge with no more than ten tables in it, all full of people eating dinner. Sherwood has a reserved seat at one of the tables with a group of regulars. While the meal had multiple courses, we are only there for the main. Sherwood was one of the younger people at the table. It was unclear specifically who all these people were (paid sponsors, ex-club staff or athletes, notable townspeople, or regulars who pay for access to the lounge) but none of that seemed to matter. All are excited when we arrive, with hugs, handshakes, and friendly banter. Dinner was followed by the match. During the first half, Sherwood mentioned he often leaves at halftime, seeing his work primarily done at that point. The club went up 2-0 quickly and the place began to buzz. Unfortunately, the positivity of the first half would not last though, as the game ended in a draw with the away team scoring a late equalizer.

Lewis initially said, while the team was winning, that we would go to the tunnel post-match. When the game drew he said we would not, calling it sport's chaplaincy discernment. As we left the facility, Lewis decided we would go down to the tunnel. As we tried to enter, a security guard did not recognize Sherwood and asked for ID. Another guard came up and said, 'that's the Reverend, he's okay to go in.' With this, we entered the tunnel. Upon arrival, a security guard mentioned that she had wished Sherwood was there two minutes sooner as there was a verbal skirmish between people from opposing teams, and she was the only one present in the tunnel.

The mood was tense in the tunnel, with players not making eye contact or speaking much. At this point it was clear that the chaplain was not a necessary staff member and we left the stadium.

As I reflected on the evening one thing stood out over all the others, Lewis and I were the only people, besides members of the first team squad and coaching or medical staff, who did not have a badge in the tunnel. Sherwood had been with the club for a long time and it showed in the relationships that were present and his comfort in the stadium; but it was most pronounced when you realized that he was given the same privilege as the first team in not needing a pass into the most secure and exclusive area in the stadium. As a result of my association with him for the evening, I was also welcomed in, not being questioned once in regard to my work, allegiances, or reason for being in that space. Being with the "Rev" was all that was needed.

Appendix Four:

Interview questions for chaplains in study

Preseason/Early Season Interview (First of Three)
The preseason interview will focus on how the chaplain became involved in sports chaplaincy, their role within the host organization and how it fits with other support staff at the club.

- Tell me how you came to be involved in sports chaplaincy?
  - How long have you served as a sports chaplain?
  - How long have you been at your current club?
  - How did you get into the role?
- Tell me about what your role entails?
  - Contractual arrangements?
  - Specific duties and expectations (religious, spiritual, pastoral)?
  - Relationships with players, staff, and coaches?
- How does your role fit with other "support staff" at the club?
  - Relationship with sports science staff?
  - Relationship with other player and coaching support staff?
    - Relationship with pastoral support mechanisms/staff
- Tell me how you approach a new season?

Mid-Season Interview (Second of Three)
The second (in-season) interview will look more closely at the theological/educational backgrounds of respondents and their particular approach to pastoral and spiritual care.

- What is your educational background?
  - What, if any, theological training do you have?
  - Do you participate in ongoing education/professional development?
    - If so, what?
- Are you a member of a ministerial or chaplaincy association?
  - Are you ordained in a specific denomination or hold any board certifications?
    - If so, with whom and for how long?
- Tell me about your religious background?
  - How would you describe your theology?
- How would you describe your work theologically?
  - What Biblical texts or theologians do you consider foundational for your life and ministry to athletes?
- How do you define evangelism?
  - Tell me how evangelism plays into your ministry to athletes?
  - Do you ask athletes to share their testimony?
    - How often do you have players do this?
    - How do you prepare/coach athletes to share their testimony?
- Tell me about your approach to pastoral care?
  - How do you approach a pastoral situation with a non-believer?

- o Do you ever refer people to professional counselors or other spiritual leaders?
  - ▪ If so, when?
- o What does discipleship mean to you?
  - ▪ Tell me how discipleship plays into your ministry to athletes?
- Tell me how the season is going?
  - o What is something going well this season?
  - o Do you feel you are meeting your goals?
  - o Tell me about something you would like to see improved in your ministry?

Post-Season Interview (Third of Three)
The third (post-season) interview will look at what kinds of governance and safeguarding structures chaplains operate within. The interview will also focus on how professional development and training are accessed and monitored.

- Who oversees your work as a chaplain at the club?
  - o How would you describe the 'governance' structures around your work and role? What kinds of line management structures do you work within? What does accountability look like for you?
  - o Does anyone oversee your work from outside the club (church, para-church organization)? i.e., mentors, Spiritual Directors etc., NFL/EPL governance/accountability?
    - ▪ Who chooses or appoints these people?
    - ▪ How often are these relationships renewed/reviewed?
    - ▪ What, if any, connection exists between internal and external lines of accountability?
  - o Is there an agreement between you and the club regarding the expectations and parameters of your work?
    - ▪ If so, what does this look like, where does it come from?
    - ▪ Is this formal and contractual?
      - • If so, how often is this reviewed?
    - ▪ What personal appraisal mechanisms are in place in terms of monitoring milestones and targets?
  - o Does your church or para-church organization have expectations for your work at the club?
    - ▪ If so, how often is this discussed, reviewed?
    - ▪ Is this formal/contractual?
    - ▪ Is is based on 'in kind' contribution to the club or remunerated or both/other?
    - ▪ What personal appraisal mechanisms are in place with this external organization in terms of monitoring milestones and targets?
  - o Do you ever complete a self-evaluation or have others evaluate your work?
    - ▪ If so, by whom and how often?
- Tell me about any code of conduct or covenant you have agreed to regarding your work as a Christian minister
  - o How does this affect your work as a sports chaplaincy?

- Tell me about mechanisms of safeguarding surrounding yourself and your work at the club
  - Safeguarding refers to the 'safety and protection' of the people who chaplains (and others) work as well as their own safety in terms of protection from unsubstantiated allegations etc., with and the ethical issues surrounding this.
  - Are there any safeguarding measures put in place for you by the club?
    - If so, what and by whom?
  - Are there any safeguarding measures put in place for you by your church or para-church organization in regards to your work as a sports chaplain?
    - If so, what and by whom?
  - Is there any structure in place for you to report any issues of safeguarding or misconduct within the team?
    - If so, who do you report to?
    - Is this process confidential?
- Are there safeguarding measures you would like to have enacted for your work as a sports chaplain?
- Tell me about any training or professional development you complete related to sports chaplaincy?
  - How often do you do this?
    - Who funds this?
  - Are you a member of a professional chaplaincy-related organisation or are you registered as a sports chaplain in some way? If so, please elaborate.
  - How do you learn about these professional development opportunities?
  - Does the club you are affiliated with expect you to complete professional development?
    - If so, how often?
    - Is this monitored?
  - Does your church or para-church organization expect you to complete professional development?
    - If so, how often?
    - Is this monitored?
- What kind of professional development would be beneficial for your work as a sports chaplain?
- Looking back, how did you feel the season went?
  - What is something that went well this season?
  - Do you feel you meet your goals?
  - What is something you would like to focus on next year?
  - What, if any, contact do you have with players, coaches, or staff in the off-season?
    - Is this expected or something you choose to do?

Follow up Questions for all NFL Chaplains and EFL Chaplains

Chaplains were also asked questions that arose during transcription, but these were specific to each respondent.

- What devotional practices do you personally practice on a consistent basis?
- How does your personal discipleship and commitment to Christ influence your role as a sports chaplain?

Appendix Five:

Questions for Para-church Organization Leaders

- Tell me about mechanisms of safeguarding surrounding chaplains at professional clubs?
    - Safeguarding refers to the 'safety and protection' of the people who chaplains (and others) work as well as their own safety in terms of protection from unsubstantiated allegations etc., with and the ethical issues surrounding this.
    - Do you know of any safeguarding measures put in place for chaplains by their clubs?
        - If so, what are they?
        - Who put them in place?
        - Who monitors these and how?
    - Are there any safeguarding measures put in place by your organization in regards to a sports chaplains work?
        - If so, what and by whom?
    - Do you know of any formal structures in place for chaplains to report any issues of safeguarding or misconduct within an NFL organization?
        - If so, who do they report to?
        - Is this process confidential?
- Are there safeguarding measures you would like to have enacted for sports chaplains by the club, league, or your organization?

- Tell me about any training or professional development you offer related to sports chaplaincy?
    - How often do you do this?
    - Is safeguarding part of this? If so, what does this look like and where/how often does this kind of training/professional development take place?
        - Who funds this?
    - Do you know of any clubs that expect chaplains to complete professional development?
        - If so, how often?
        - How is this monitored?
    - Does your church or para-church organization expect chaplains to complete professional development?
        - If so, how often?
        - How is this monitored?
- In your opinion, what kind of professional development would be beneficial for for sports chaplains?

Appendix Six:

Sports Chaplaincy UK Code of Practice (Sports Chaplaincy UK, 2016)

CODE OF PRACTICE

This Code of Practice is intended to help create and maintain high standards in chaplaincy practice. The club and chaplain are also referred to SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK's *Introduction to Sports Chaplaincy* which gives more detail on the role and expectations the charity has for their chaplains. Chaplaincy work involves a 3-way relationship between the chaplain, the club and SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK and best practice is therefore served by an agreement between all parties as to the best way of operating. It is also suggested that such work is evaluated by all parties at suitable times in order to retain that high standard.

Within that relationship there are expectations on all parties involved:-

The CHAPLAIN is expected to:

1. Be acceptable to the club and SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK and have the support of their church.

2. Be spiritually alive and possess recognised pastoral gifts in order to be able to deliver excellence in chaplaincy.

3. Give a regular weekly commitment of at least half a day.

4. To have undertaken Safeguarding training and an enhanced DBS disclosure or a PVG membership check as organised by and in line with the policies and procedures of the club, league or organisation being served.

5. Be willing to be involved in life skills teaching to young athletes where required and appropriate as part of the welfare set up at the club.

6. Attend SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK's "Induction to Sports Chaplaincy" and then give time to ongoing training and networking via regional and annual meetings / conferences.

7. Have an understanding of their responsibility to other chaplains, to the club and to the community linked to that club.

8. Work within the boundaries agreed with the club.

9. Be committed to being available to all.

10. Maintain a professional approach to the task and confidentiality, within permitted legal boundaries.

11. Be available to meet individuals pastorally outside the club setting.

12. To inform SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK in advance of any need to lay down chaplaincy responsibilities and to discuss hand-over possibilities.

13. To liaise sensitively, and in advance, with the club over the reimbursement of any costs incurred in the furtherance of pastoral work within the club, (e.g. costs of gifts, support for training conferences, travel expenses etc.)

Sports Chaplaincy UK is supported by:

SCUK Code of practice 2016.indd   1

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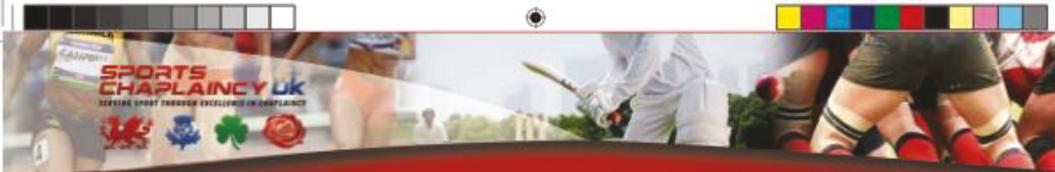
The CLUB is expected to:

1. Agree to mutually acceptable expressions of chaplaincy involvement and to define broad expectations and boundaries.

2. Identify a person who will act as a prime contact, and who has a supportive and evaluative role with reference to the chaplain.

3. Offer advice and help in providing reasonable accessibility and resources necessary for the work, i.e. to meet up with people and staff linked with the club (e.g. security pass / identification card / introduction for access / ongoing training wherever appropriate, etc.)

4. To supervise the chaplain's enhanced DBS disclosure and or carry out a PVG membership check in line with the club's recruitment and training procedures.

5. To inform SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK in the exceptional circumstances of problems arising between themselves and the chaplain, or if for whatever reason the chaplain has to move on.

6. To liaise in advance with the chaplain over the issue of reimbursement of possible exceptional expenses incurred in pastoral ministry within the club to the mutual satisfaction of each party.

7. To make known the broad role and availability of the chaplain to staff, players and associates at the club.

SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK is expected to:

1. Provide a Code of Practice for the club and chaplain as a basis for their working together.

2. Offer ongoing training, support and nurturing of high quality chaplaincy provision.

3. Provide opportunities for networking with other chaplains, regionally and nationally.

4. Liaise with the appropriate person at the club in the exceptional circumstances of difficulties arising between themselves and their chaplain.

5. Offer continuity when the chaplain moves on.

6. Advocate both an annual evaluation of the chaplain's work and the provision of appropriate feedback to the chaplain by the club.

Agreement to abide by the code of practice:-

THE CHAPLAIN	FOR AND ON BEHALF OF SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK	FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE CLUB
		Club name: ....
Name:	Name:	Name: ....
Signature:	Position:	Position: ....
Date:	Signature:	Signature: ....
	Date:	Date: ....

Appendix Seven:

Cru Statement of Faith (Cru, 2021a)

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, God's infallible written Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks.

We accept those areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all true Christians. Because of the specialized calling of our movement, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on other doctrinal matters, provided that any interpretation is based upon the Bible alone, and that no such interpretation shall become an issue which hinders the ministry to which God has called us.

1. There is one true God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.
2. Jesus Christ is God, the living Word, who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Hence, He is perfect Deity and true humanity united in one person forever.
3. He lived a sinless life and voluntarily atoned for human sins by dying on the cross as a substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone.
4. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died.
5. He ascended bodily into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and humanity, continually makes intercession for His own.
6. Adam and Eve were originally created in the image of God. They sinned by disobeying God; thus, they were alienated from their Creator. That historic fall brought all people under divine condemnation.
7. Human nature is corrupted. As a result, all people are totally unable to please God. Everyone is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
8. Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justified them in His sight.
9. It is the privilege of all who are born again of the Spirit to be assured of their salvation from the very moment in which they trust Christ as their Savior. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit, but is produced by the witness of the Holy Spirit, who confirms in the believer the testimony of God in His written word.
10. The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to individuals. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith.
11. Believers are called to live so in the power of the indwelling Spirit that they will not fulfill the lust of the flesh but will bear fruit to the glory of God.

12. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith.

13. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement.

14. At physical death the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of the body to everlasting glory and blessing.

15. At physical death the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of the body to everlasting judgment and condemnation.

16. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth – personally, visibly and bodily – to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

17. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to disciple people from every nation. The fulfillment of that Great Commission requires that all worldly and personal ambitions be subordinated to a total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us."

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