

THE ROLE OF THE CONTEMPORARY PRISON CHAPLAIN

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This research addresses an oversight in the literature on correctional employees by exploring the role of prison chaplains. Based on a national sample of 232 chaplains, it was discovered that prison ministers perform a wide range of secular and religious tasks including counseling inmates, coordinating religious programs, paperwork, supervising volunteers, and conducting religious services. Furthermore, we learned that although chaplains believe that their main purpose is to serve inmates, the majority of chaplains also identified with the prison's custodial objectives. Finally, we found that chaplains' experiences of role problems varied by their individual characteristics and, to a greater extent, by whether they had supportive supervisors.

Little is known today about prison chaplains or the work that they perform. A cursory review of current correctional textbooks reveals, for instance, that if chaplains are mentioned at all, the treatment is in passing and peripheral (Allen & Simonson, 1998; Clear & Cole, 1997; Hawkins & Alpert, 1989; Shover & Einstadter, 1988; Stojkovic & Lovell, 1992; Welch, 1996; cf. Fox & Stinchcomb, 1994). In short, this obscure office—as de Beaumont and de Tocqueville (1833/ 1964) referred to the prison chaplaincy—has gone virtually unstudied by students of penology (for exceptions, see Murphy, 1956; Shaw, 1995).

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This neglect occurs despite the fact that virtually every prison in the United States has at least one full-time chaplain ("Religious Programs," 1983). Furthermore, chaplains occupy a unique place within the prison system. Shaw (1995)—a chaplain himself—has pointed out, for example, that "chaplains are the only personnel, other than Corrections Officers, who regularly interact with inmates on the tier area" (p. 7). Unlike correctional officers, however, the chaplain's role is not custodial. An intriguing aspect of the chaplain's role is that he or she ostensibly occupies a position between offenders and their custodians.

Moreover, the chaplains' importance as agents of social change has been suggested by Glaser (1964). Notably, Glaser found that among inmates who attributed their postrelease success to members of the prison staff, one sixth cited the prison chaplains, although chaplains constituted less than 1% of the prison employees. Furthermore, chaplains were the second most frequently cited staff members credited with bringing about inmates' rehabilitation.

Relatedly, there is a growing interest in assessing the effect of religious programming on inmate prison adjustment and recidivism. With reports that approximately one in three inmates participate in religious programs (U.S. Department of Justice, 1993; also see "Religious Programs," 1983), these questions have become germane. Although tentative and preliminary, a handful of studies have concluded that participation in religious programming improves institutional adjustment and reduces recidivism among certain inmates (Clear et al., 1992a, 1992b; B. R. Johnson, 1987; B. R. Johnson, Larson, Pitts, 1997; Young, Gartner, O'Conner, Larson, & Wright, 1995).

In spite of their prevalence and aside from a few hints about the efficacy of religious programming and the importance of the chaplain to inmate adjustment, very little research has been conducted on chaplains (for exceptions see Murphy, 1956; Shaw, 1995). Similar to other criminal justice employees, however, chaplains are a group worthy of study in and of themselves.¹ As potential agents of social support—or, alternatively, agents of social control—chaplains have the ability to shape intimately the prison experience of offenders. Developing an understanding of the role that the contemporary chaplain plays in our correctional institutions is thus a potentially valuable enterprise.

THE EVOLUTION OF PRISON MINISTRY

As the principal religious representative in a system created by religious impetus, the chaplain was originally a person of considerable importance in

the prison. Indeed, throughout much of the 1800s the chaplain's influence and political clout rivaled those of the warden (see, e.g., Skotnicki, 1991). In brief, during the 19th century, the chaplain was fully engaged in the penological debates of the time and played a central role in the daily operation of prisons (McKelvey, 1977; Skotnicki, 1991).

Furthermore, the chaplain's role was originally broad, encompassing a wide range of activities. Although much of the chaplain's time was spent visiting inmates in their cells, delivering short sermons to laboring prisoners, and providing religious services to inmates on Sundays (Adamson, 1992; Skotnicki, 1991), the chaplain also performed a number of more secular activities. For example, the chaplain was responsible for opening and operating the first prison libraries and was the first to organize prison schools, assuming full responsibility for educating inmates. In addition, the chaplain frequently led temperance revivals, created programs for discharged inmates, compiled detailed statistical reports for state legislatures and philanthropic societies, and occasionally raised an intrainstitutional voice against the maltreatment of inmates (Skotnicki, 1991).

By 1900, however, the chaplain's role in the prison began to be challenged. With the rise of rationalism and the social sciences, the chaplain became a religious representative in a secularized institution of professionals. Furthermore, when the role of religion in the prison was marginalized, the chaplaincy was diminished with it. The duties that the chaplain had traditionally performed were largely taken over by professionals and specialists. This change is poignantly illustrated by Sanford Bates, who observed in 1938 that:

With the separation of duties it appeared to us that the ministry of the chaplain in a penal institution had entirely changed. The prison school had been taken over by the trained educationalists. Family contacts were handled by the social workers and the libraries staffed by trained librarians. Apparently there is nothing else but religion for the chaplain to busy himself about, and that could be done on Sunday in an hour or two. (p. 163)

One consequence of the marginalization of the chaplaincy was that the role of the chaplain became increasingly ambiguous following 1900. Beyond the basic feature of ministering to inmates, the purpose of the chaplaincy was no longer clear (Sundt, 1997).

In essence, chaplains' relevance and value to the prison were seriously called into question. Rather than recede to the periphery, however, chaplains have traditionally attempted to recast the nature of their work. The history of the chaplaincy from 1900 to the present, therefore, has been characterized by

efforts to maintain legitimacy and to negotiate a position of value outside of a strictly spiritual role. Again, this change was well-captured by Bates (1938), who noted that he had been mistaken about the value of the chaplain:

The chaplains role, *rightly construed* [italics added], is an extremely important job in any institution. But he must be a new type of "sky pilot" . . . He must not depend too much on homiletics. He must know something of psychiatry and he must be able to talk the language of the man he would befriend . . . The chaplain of the newer order will have to be relied upon to stimulate the will to reform. (pp. 163-164)

As this passage illustrates, the chaplaincy's value began to be tied to its ability to serve institutional needs; when rightly construed, the chaplaincy could remain relevant to the prison. In other words, the value of prison ministry came to be defined primarily by the extent to which it could advance central correctional goals as defined by the secular professionals administering the prison.

Thus, during the Progressive Era, chaplains defined their roles as educational (Scott, 1906; Thornton 1903), as faith was placed in the ability of education to reform the offender (see McKelvey, 1977). Consistent with the medical model, the chaplain was characterized as a soul doctor and a moral physician (Giesen, 1936). During the 1930s and the 1960s, the chaplaincy was strongly oriented toward the rehabilitation of offenders. Chaplains became members of treatment teams and reeducated themselves in psychology and clinical pastoral education (Keuther, 1951; Powers, 1960). During the 1950s, as leading penologists began to stress the importance of winning public support for rehabilitation to obtain adequate funding for treatment programs, chaplains were called on to use their community contacts to campaign for rehabilitation (Alexander, 1960; Oliver, 1972). The 1970s saw chaplains' spiritual roles broaden and become more ecumenical to ensure inmates' new-found religious freedoms.

Most recently, the value of the prison ministry has been tied to chaplains' abilities to facilitate inmate management (Cook, 1994; also see Feeley & Simon, 1992). A different perspective is offered by Fewell (1995), however, who has argued that for chaplains to maintain their position in the modern prison, it is necessary for them to take a comprehensive approach to prison ministry that includes counseling inmates and coordinating and recruiting religious volunteers to provide specific religious services. Chaplains who perform the traditional role of pastor risk being replaced with volunteers who are arguably better able to meet the diverse religious needs of inmates and do so at no cost to the prison system.

THE NATURE OF PRISON MINISTRY

Although the chaplaincy's value has been continually recast since 1900 to appeal to changing correctional needs, very little is known about what chaplains do on a daily basis. The chaplain has been described as a jack-of-all-trades, performing a wide range of duties from conducting religious services to selecting the weekend movie (Morris, 1961). As described by a chaplain in 1879:

From the hospital to the office, from the office to the wing, from the wing to the corridor, from the corridor to the cells, from the cells to the workshop, from the shops to the camps, the faithful, earnest chaplain will find duty, *duty*, DUTY enough to tax all of the brain and talents God has given him. (Wines, 1880/1968, p. 209)

Still, little is known about the specific activities that occupy the prison chaplain's days.

A 1956 dissertation by George L. Murphy provides some insight into chaplains' responsibilities. In a study titled, *The Social Role of the Prison Chaplain*, Murphy asked a sample of 149 chaplains from 110 institutions to report how much time they devoted to several activities. Murphy found that more than 90% of the chaplains surveyed spent much of their time counseling inmates. It was also found that all of the chaplains conducted religious services, although a quarter indicated that they spent little time doing so. Helping inmates adjust to prison, encouraging inmates to repent, counseling and helping inmates' families, and assisting inmates make parole plans were also activities performed by more than 80% of the chaplains in this study. Other frequently performed duties included following up inmates on parole, acting as a channel of communication from inmates to wardens, and making visits to the homes of inmates. Less frequently performed activities included serving on committees, working in educational programs, showing visitors through prisons, supervising recreational activities, supervising vocational programs, and censoring mail, movies, or books.

In addition to having chaplains report how much time they devoted to these activities, Murphy also surveyed 125 wardens and asked them to rate the importance of each of the chaplains' tasks. The results parallel those of the chaplain survey. Wardens reported that the chaplains' most important task was conducting religious services, followed by counseling inmates, helping inmates adjust to prison, encouraging inmates to repent, and counseling and helping inmates' families. In contrast, the wardens indicated that they were less supportive of chaplains' supervising vocational programs,

censoring mail, supervising recreational activities, or showing visitors through the prison.

Although Murphy's (1956) study of the role of the chaplain is more than 40 years old, recent accounts of chaplains' responsibilities reveal a similar picture. More current descriptions of the chaplains' duties all include conducting religious services (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Morris, 1961; Raphael, 1991; Shaw, 1995; Thompson, 1989; Wallace, 1976; Williams, 1996). The chaplains' responsibilities, however, are not confined to such services. Other frequently mentioned activities include counseling inmates (Acorn, 1990; Morris, 1961; Shaw, 1995; Thompson, 1989; Williams, 1996), conducting religious education programs (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Morris, 1961; Williams, 1996), visiting inmates in isolation, segregation, and the hospital (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Marble, 1988; Raphael, 1991; Williams, 1996), counseling and helping inmates' families (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Marble, 1988; Shaw, 1995; Thompson, 1989; Williams, 1996), representing the inmates and/or the prison with religious groups in the community (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Wallace, 1976; Williams, 1996), performing weddings and funerals for inmates and prison staff (Acorn, 1990; Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Raphael, 1991; Shaw, 1995), counseling death row inmates (Marble, 1988; Marlette, 1992), coordinating religious programs (Bartollas & Miller, 1978; Fewell, 1995), and supervising volunteers (Fewell, 1995; Shaw, 1995). It has also been noted that chaplains occasionally make community contacts and referrals regarding inmates' parole and postrelease housing and employment ("Religious Programs," 1983; Wallace, 1976).

In addition to these responsibilities, several authors report that chaplains minister to prison staff, particularly in times of crisis (Cook, 1994; Morris, 1961; Raphael, 1991; Thompson, 1989; Williams, 1996). In fact, a 1982 report on the chaplaincy program in South Carolina implies that prison ministry exists primarily for the sake of officers and staff (also see Murton, 1979). According to this report, besides counseling inmates upon request, chaplains are expected to attend department award ceremonies and social events, be on call to respond to emergencies, assist in conducting memorial services and other religious ceremonies upon request, and visit officers and their families who are in the hospital (Metts & Cook, 1982). The report also states that chaplains "shall not interfere with officers but shall be ready to assist officers at the officer's request and discretion" (1982, p. 7). This characterization of the chaplains' responsibilities contrasts sharply with other accounts, which describe chaplains as answering the biblical mandate to minister to the incarcerated (Belden, 1938; Campbell, 1989; Eshelman, 1968; James, 1990; Raphael, 1991; Wallace, 1976).

ASSESSING THE CHAPLAINS' ROLES

THE CHAPLAINS' TASKS

Although the above review gives some insight into what chaplains do on a daily basis, most of what is known about chaplains is drawn from short statements in corrections books or from writings by chaplains based on personal observation and opinion. Thus, it is unclear whether these accounts are accurate and representative. Furthermore, the existing empirical work is in short supply: a dissertation by Murphy (1956) written more than 40 years ago and Shaw's (1995) study of chaplains from one state (New York) and from the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Although relatively recent and insightful, Shaw's study not only uses a limited sample, but also does not present data specifically on the roles of chaplains.

Given the general lack of knowledge about prison ministers, one of the primary objectives of this research is to examine systematically the activities that chaplains engage in on a day-to-day basis. In assessing chaplains' responsibilities, two related issues are explored. First, we examine the extent to which chaplains perform secular as opposed to sacred duties. As discussed above, chaplains have historically been responsible for both. Furthermore, since the 1900s, the value of the chaplaincy has been tied to its utility in furthering central correctional objectives and meeting institutional needs. In other words, the chaplaincy's value has been related to the performance of more secular duties. It is expected that although spiritual activities will be defined as their primary responsibility in prisons, chaplains will also report that they are responsible for a number of secular duties as well. It is uncertain, however, whether chaplains will attribute more importance to their spiritual or secular responsibilities.

Second, we assess the extent to which chaplains engage in activities that are supportive and rehabilitative or, alternatively, activities that are custodial. Chaplains have frequently been identified as members of the treatment staff (see, e.g., E. H. Johnson, 1968, 1974; Tappan, 1960). In addition, as mentioned above, some chaplains may have clinical training, including psychology degrees and clinical pastoral education, and may see their function in prison as primarily rehabilitative (Morris, 1961; also see Taft, 1978). Several authors have noted, however, that chaplains also serve a custodial function at times (Metts & Cook, 1982; Morris, 1961; Murton, 1979). Included in the description of what is expected of chaplains in South Carolina, for instance, was the mandate that chaplains be ready to assist correctional officers at their request and discretion (Metts & Cook, 1982). This implies that chap-

lains may help control or at least supervise inmates. This impression is confirmed by a 1961 interview. Reflecting on the chaplaincy, one minister recalled that "if there was a shortage of guards, he [the chaplain] was given a billy-club and expected to stand duty along with the custodial officers" (Morris, 1961, p. 17). More recently, Cook (1994) has argued that the chaplain can be a valuable member of the inmate management team. Although Cook does not suggest that chaplains take up the billy club, he does contend that religious programming can occupy inmates' time and that chaplains may help to diffuse hostile situations. Based on what is known about the chaplains' roles, it is expected that chaplains will view their roles as multifaceted and perform a range of duties.

ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ROLE CONFLICT

In addition to exploring the nature of the chaplains' duties, we are concerned with chaplains' experiences of role problems. This interest stems from two observations. First, since 1900, the chaplain's role has ostensibly become ambiguous. In other words, a potential consequence of appealing to the chaplaincy's ability to further various correctional goals is role ambiguity. It may be unclear, for example, if chaplains should focus their efforts on counseling inmates, coordinating religious programs, or helping to maintain order. In brief, chaplains may be uncertain about what is expected of them outside of providing religious services. Shaw (1995) has noted that "the role of a chaplain is one of confused and varying expectations" (p. 42). What remains to be seen, however, is whether chaplains agree with this assessment.

Second, descriptions of the chaplaincy suggest that prison ministers may experience high levels of role conflict. As discussed above, for example, chaplains are responsible for a wide range of duties. Furthermore, these duties may be secular, sacred, rehabilitative, or custodial in nature—requiring divergent and often contradictory role performances. Commenting on the conflict between spiritual and secular duties, Murton (1979) observes that

one of the problems facing prison ministers is how to recognize but not cross the thin line of apparent ambiguity between heeding the biblical mandate of service to those who need it and yet at the same time performing their assigned tasks to the satisfaction of prison officials. (p. 7)

Accordingly, we expect to find that chaplains will experience role conflict arising from these contradictory expectations. Furthermore, unlike other members of the prison work group (with the possible exception of the treatment staff), chaplains occupy a position between inmates and their custodi-

ans. Chaplains are also in the unique position of ministering to both inmates and prison staff. Consequently, chaplains are likely to experience role conflict when attempting to balance their responsibilities to inmates with those to COs and administrators. Finally, unlike other prison employees, chaplains have alliances outside of the prison. For example, most chaplains are affiliated with a church or denomination in addition to being employed by the prisons. The chaplains' churches and the prison administration are likely to have conflicting expectations of the chaplains. In sum, chaplains may experience role conflict as they attempt to perform divergent responsibilities, negotiate a comfortable position between inmates and prison staff, and balance their allegiances to church and state.

VARIATIONS IN ROLE PROBLEMS

Beyond assessing the level of role conflict and role ambiguity experienced by chaplains, we also investigate why some chaplains experience higher levels of role ambiguity and role conflict than others do. Consistent with previous research on correctional employees (Cullen, Lutze, Link, & Wolfe, 1989; Jurik, 1985; Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1989), we draw on two models to guide the analysis: the individual experiences-importation model and the work-role-prisonization model.² The individual experiences-importation model suggests that individuals' attributes, such as age, gender, race, and education, affect their perceptions and behaviors while at work. In other words, reactions to working in prison are the result of different experiences that individuals of different social statuses bring with them, or import, to the job. In contrast, the work-role-prisonization model posits that reactions to working in prison are shaped primarily by being exposed to certain organizational environments and by being socialized to a work role. That is, perceptions and behaviors are influenced by what a person experiences while on the job.

Our data set contains several indicators of individual experiences including age, race, gender, and education. Based on the correctional officer research, however, there is little reason to suspect that these variables will exhibit strong effects on chaplains' experiences of role ambiguity and role conflict. For example, neither Van Voorhis et al. (1991) nor Whitehead and Lindquist (1986) found age to be significantly related to correctional officers' feelings of role problems. Furthermore, Van Voorhis et al. (1991) discovered that race, gender, and education similarly did not affect COs feelings of role problems. Still, due to the limited amount of research in this area and given the potential differences between COs and chaplains, the influence of these variables warrant consideration. Feeling called to prison ministry is an

additional importation variable of interest. Poole and Regoli (1980, 1983) discovered, for example, that correctional officers and mid-level correctional administrators who felt called to their work were less likely to experience role conflict. Thus, it is expected that chaplains who feel called to prison ministry will be less likely to find their work ambiguous and conflicting.

The effect of three work-related variables will also be examined: work experience (years as a chaplain), working in a maximum security prison, and supervisory support. Although Van Voorhis et al. (1991) found that work experience had no appreciable effect on role conflict, it is possible that role problems will lessen with job experience as chaplains become more familiar with their work and negotiate the contradictory aspects of the chaplaincy. The relationship between role problems and security level is also unclear. Hepburn and Albonetti's (1980) findings suggest that chaplains working in maximum security prisons will be less likely to experience role conflict than will those working in less secure prisons, presumably because the organizational goals of maximum security prisons (i.e., custody and control) are less conflicting and ambiguous. This finding, however, was not replicated by Van Voorhis et al. (1991), who found no relationship between role problems and security level. Finally, previous research on COs suggests that role ambiguity and role conflict may be mitigated by social supports, particularly supervisory support (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; also see Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Thus, we explore whether chaplains with supportive supervisors are less likely to feel that their roles are ambiguous and contradictory.

METHODS

SAMPLE

In the fall of 1997, questionnaires were mailed to a randomly selected sample of 500 chaplains identified by the American Correctional Association as being employed in the United States. Following Dillman's (1978) total design method, with slight modifications, each person in the sample was mailed a questionnaire, a letter introducing the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. A reminder letter was mailed to the entire sample 1 week later encouraging the return of the surveys. Three weeks after the initial mailing, replacement questionnaires were mailed to all those who had not responded. This process was repeated again 5 weeks after the first mailing. The original sample size of 500 was reduced to 402, however, when a number of surveys were returned undelivered because the respondents were either retired, no

TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics

<i>Variable Characteristic</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sex		
Male	190	85.2
Female	33	14.8
Race		
White	186	84.2
Non-White	35	15.8
Education		
High school graduate	11	5.0
Associates degree	6	2.7
Bachelor's degree	32	14.5
Master's degree	133	60.2
Doctoral degree	39	17.6
Age (<i>M</i>)	56.45	
Years of experience (<i>M</i>)	10.25	

NOTE: $N = 232$.

longer at the address listed, or deceased. Out of the 402 deliverable questionnaires, 232 were returned, for a response rate of 57.7%.

Table 1 reports the sample's characteristics. The chaplains surveyed are predominately White males in their 50s and 60s with an average of 10 years experience at the institution where they are employed. More than 90% of chaplains are college graduates, and the vast majority of these individuals have completed postgraduate degrees.

MEASURES

Chaplains' tasks. Drawing on recent descriptions of the chaplaincy (e.g., Cook, 1994; Fewell, 1995; Morris, 1961; Thompson, 1989; Williams, 1996) and on the works of Murphy (1956) and Shaw (1995), a list of activities was compiled to assess how chaplains spend their time (see Table 2). Chaplains were asked to indicate the amount of time they give to each activity on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 equal to *no time* and 10 equal to *almost all of their time*. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, additional space was provided to allow the respondents to fill in activities that may have been overlooked.

In addition to determining how chaplains spend their time, we were also interested in the importance that they assign to various activities. Thus, chaplains were asked to rank order the following activities in importance: conducting religious services, counseling inmates, supervising volunteers, teaching religious education, and coordinating religious programs. This list

TABLE 2: Categorization and Mean Rank of Chaplains' Tasks

<i>Category Task</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Administrative/organizational tasks	4.495	1
Coordinating religious programs	6.247	2
Paperwork	5.860	3
Supervising volunteers	5.491	4
Recruiting religious volunteers	4.272	10
Serving on committees	3.473	14
Censoring mail, movies, or books	2.014	22
Services to inmates	4.013	2
Counseling inmates	6.910	1
Helping inmates adjust to prison	5.004	6
Visiting inmates in isolation or segregation	4.856	7
Helping inmates make plans for their release	4.493	8
Counseling and helping inmates' families	3.964	13
Visiting sick inmates	3.392	17
Counseling death row inmates	2.254	20
Teaching general education	1.895	24
Religious activities	3.592	3
Conducting religious services	5.413	5
Religious education	4.482	9
Encouraging inmates to repent	4.041	13
Performing religious ceremonies for inmates	2.353	20
Performing religious ceremonies for staff	1.982	24
Assistance to other correctional staff	3.261	4
Assisting warden or assistant wardens	3.403	16
Assisting correctional officers	3.427	15
Visiting sick staff	3.112	18
Community relations	3.175	5
Representing the prison with religious groups in the community	4.050	11
Showing visitors through the prison	2.225	21

is composed of activities that are mentioned most frequently in literature about the chaplaincy.

To shed further light on the extent to which the chaplains' roles encompass custodial concerns, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement, on a 6-point Likert scale, with a series of statements (see Table 5). These statements assess whether chaplains feel that keeping inmates from causing trouble is a major concern, whether they are willing to lend a hand to COs and provide custodial staff with information about inmates, and whether they are called on to calm inmates down. The respondents were also asked to report about whether COs saw chaplains as people who could help control inmates.

Role ambiguity and role conflict. The most widely used measures of role conflict and/or role ambiguity used in the literature on correctional officers are found in Poole and Regoli (1980) and in Quinn and Staines (1979). Although measures from both sources are reliable, Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman's (1970) indicators of role conflict and role ambiguity are better suited for this study. In addition to being theoretically derived and subjected to reliability testing, Rizzo et al.'s measures of role conflict and role ambiguity are factorially independent. This point is particularly relevant for the study of correctional chaplains. As previously argued, the chaplains' roles are ostensibly conflicting and ambiguous. Furthermore, these role problems appear to stem from different sources. Thus, independent measures of role conflict and role ambiguity are important and may provide additional insight into the nature of the chaplaincy.

Rizzo et al.'s (1970) seven-item index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$) of role conflict was designed to assess the extent to which individuals experience conflict between internal standards and defined role behavior; conflict between time, resources, or capabilities and role behavior; conflict between several roles; and conflicting expectations and organizational demands. Rizzo et al.'s measure of role ambiguity consists of six items ($\alpha = .81$). This measure is designed to tap perceptions of "certainty about duties, allocation of time, and relations with others; the clarity and existence of guides, directives, and policies; and the ability to predict sanctions as outcomes of behavior" (p. 156). For both measures of role problems, the participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each item on a 6-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* (scale items are contained in Table 6). Responses were coded so that high scores reflected greater feelings of role ambiguity and role conflict.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The individual-level variables examined here include age, level of education, race (1 = non-White; 0 = White), and gender (1 = female; 0 = male). The work-related variables consist of years as a chaplain and working in a maximum security prison (1 = maximum security prison only; 0 = all other types). In addition, supervisory support was measured with a four-item index ($\alpha = .72$) drawn from Cullen, Lemming, Link, and Wozniak (1985). This index assesses the extent to which chaplains view their supervisors in the prisons as supportive by asking chaplains whether prison administrators encourage them to do their jobs well, handle disputes in a friendly manner, stress the importance of their jobs, and blame others when things go wrong. Finally, calling to the chaplaincy was measured with a two-item index ($\alpha = .62$) de-

rived in part from Davidson and Caddell (1994). Specifically, chaplains were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements: "My work has special meaning because I have been called by God to do what I am doing" and "I was put on earth to do what I am doing." This index is designed to measure the extent to which chaplains feel called by God to their work with prisoners.

RESULTS

As mentioned above, chaplains have traditionally been portrayed as jacks-of-all-trades. To a large extent, our analysis confirms this characterization, indicating that chaplains perform a wide range of duties. Table 2 summarizes the results of the task analysis and includes the mean score for each task, the rank of the task, and a categorization of the chaplains' duties. It was discovered that chaplains spend most of their time counseling inmates (mean score = 6.9) and coordinating religious programs (mean score = 6.2). Other regularly performed activities (means range from 5.9 to 5.0) include paperwork, supervising volunteers, and conducting religious services. In addition to these tasks, chaplains report spending time (means range from 4.9 to 4.0) helping inmates adjust to prison, helping inmates make plans for their release, teaching religious education, recruiting volunteers, and representing the prison with religious groups in the community. Aside from these duties, chaplains occasionally (means range from 3.9 to 3.1) counsel and help inmates' families; encourage inmates to repent; serve on committees; assist wardens, assistant wardens, and correctional officers; and visit sick inmates.

Less frequently performed duties (i.e., with means less than 3.0) include visiting sick prison staff and their families; showing visitors through the prison; performing religious ceremonies for inmates; counseling death row inmates; and censoring mail, movies, or books. Finally, chaplains report spending very little time performing religious ceremonies for prison staff and teaching general education.

In addition to these items, chaplains were given the opportunity to report about other activities that they perform. Although few chaplains wrote in other tasks, a few responses should be noted. For instance, several chaplains reported conducting drug and alcohol classes or treatment programs, conflict resolution classes, or family and parenting classes. Another chaplain noted that he spent much of his time walking around the prison and talking to inmates. One chaplain stated that a significant amount of her time was spent advocating for inmates and ensuring that the prison was in compliance with

TABLE 3: Mean Rank of Chaplains' Tasks: Importance Given to Activity

<i>Task</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Counseling inmates	2.022	1
Conducting religious services	2.482	2
Coordinating religious programs	2.960	3
Religious education	3.412	4
Supervising volunteers	3.592	5

NOTE: Question: "Rank the following activities from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important duty and 5 being the least important duty."

constitutional requirements of religious freedom. A few chaplains also indicated that part of their duties included supervising other chaplains.

To shed additional light on the nature of the chaplaincy, the findings of the task analysis were classified into broad categories to provide a more general sense of how chaplains spend their days. As reported in Table 2, chaplains appear to perform five broad types of activities: administrative/organizational tasks, services to inmates, religious activities, assistance to other correctional staff, and community relations. Based on a ranking of category means³, this classification reveals that, on the average, chaplains spend more of their time performing administrative and/or organizational tasks. Following administrative/organizational tasks, chaplains spend most of their time providing services to inmates, followed by engaging in religious activities. Two less frequently performed types of tasks are providing assistance to other correctional staff and promoting community relations.

In addition to reporting how much time they spend on tasks, chaplains were also asked to rank the importance of five tasks. As presented in Table 3, chaplains rated counseling inmates as their most important duty, followed by conducting religious services, coordinating religious programs, teaching religious education, and supervising volunteers.

A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 reveals minor discrepancies between those activities that chaplains view as most important and those activities on which they spend most of their time. For example, counseling inmates is ranked the most important task and the task that consumes the most time. Furthermore, conducting religious services and coordinating religious programs are ranked high in both importance and frequency of demand. The remaining two tasks, conducting religious education and supervising volunteers, diverge somewhat from this pattern. Specifically, chaplains rank supervising volunteers as the least important task out of the five tasks rated, yet it is an activity that chaplains spend a large portion of their time doing; only paper-

TABLE 4: Comparison of Time Spent on Activities By Rank: 1956 to 1997

<i>Task</i>	<i>Current Sample 1997</i>	<i>Murphy 1956</i>
Counseling inmates	1	1
Conducting religious services	2	2
Helping inmates adjust to prison	3	3
Helping inmates make parole/release plans	4	6
Working in educational programs	5	8
Encouraging inmates to repent	6	4
Counseling and helping inmates' families	7	5
Serving on committees	8	7
Showing visitors through the prison	9	9
Censoring mail, movies, or books	10	10

NOTE: Correlation coefficient = .8667.

work, coordinating religious programs, and counseling inmates are performed more frequently. There is also some discrepancy between the two lists regarding the importance of religious education and the frequency with which chaplains perform this activity. Religious education is ranked fourth out of the five tasks listed (mean = 3.4), but it is ranked ninth in frequency of performance.

Thus far, we have described how contemporary chaplains spend their days and the importance they place on five primary tasks. An additional area of interest is whether the chaplains' roles have changed substantially over time. To address this question, the results of the task analysis presented above were compared with the results of Murphy's (1956) study by ranking tasks common to both studies from 1 to 10, according to the amount of time that chaplains reported spending on each activity.⁴ The results of this comparison are displayed in Table 4.

As reported in Table 4, the chaplains' roles, at least as defined by the types of tasks performed, have change little over time. Counseling inmates, conducting religious services, and helping inmates adjust to prison are ranked first, second, and third, respectively, in both samples. Similarly, showing visitors through the prison and censoring mail, movies, or books were ranked ninth and tenth in both samples. There are some differences, however, between Murphy's (1956) findings and those reported here. The results of the present study indicate that contemporary chaplains spend more time helping inmates make plans for their releases and more time working in educational programs than their predecessors did. Conversely, chaplains appear to spend less time encouraging inmates to repent and counseling and helping inmates' families than they once did.⁵ Still, the similarities between the 1997 and 1956

samples are more noteworthy than are their differences. This observation is further supported when the two lists are correlated. Treating each sample as a variable, the lists are significantly correlated at less than the .002 level, with a correlation coefficient of .87.

In summary, the findings discussed above suggest that chaplains continue to intimately work with inmates. It also reveals, however, that chaplains now report spending a significant amount of their time coordinating religious programs and supervising volunteers—activities that were not even included in Murphy's (1956) study. It is also safe to conclude, however, that the chaplains' roles continue to be multifaceted, including a diverse range of activities.

SECULAR VERSUS SACRED DUTIES

One question posed above was whether the chaplains' roles are primarily religious in nature or whether chaplains also perform secular duties. A review of Tables 2 and 3 reveals that, as anticipated, chaplains are not confined to performing religious tasks. In fact, this research indicates that chaplains spend most of their time performing secular duties. This observation is supported by noting that the four most frequently performed tasks—counseling inmates, coordinating religious programs, paperwork, and supervising volunteers—are of a secular nature. Furthermore, conducting religious services and teaching religious education are the only strictly spiritual tasks ranked among the 10 most frequently performed duties. Likewise, when chaplains' tasks are categorized, we find that on the average, chaplains spend more time on administrative and/or organizational tasks and providing inmates with services than they spend on religious activities. Thus, these results support the expectation that chaplains perform a wide range of religious and secular duties in the prison.

A related issue is the importance that chaplains assign to their sacred and secular duties. As discussed previously (see Table 3), when chaplains were asked to rank the importance of five primary tasks, chaplains typically assigned the greatest importance to counseling inmates. Although chaplains may approach counseling from a spiritual standpoint, the task of counseling inmates is arguably a secular duty. Without further questioning, however, it is difficult to conclusively argue that the task considered most important by chaplains is a strictly secular activity. More clear is the finding that chaplains see both secular and sacred tasks as important components of their work. For example, conducting religious services was considered more important than were coordinating religious programs and supervising volunteers—two activities on which chaplains spend a sizable amount of time.

SUPPORT VERSUS CONTROL

The task analysis summarized above provides some insight into whether the chaplains' roles may be characterized as supportive and rehabilitative or, alternatively, custodial. As previously discussed, chaplains spend a large portion of their time providing services to inmates. This finding supports the view that the chaplain's role is supportive of inmates. Although the task analysis provides little indication that chaplains perform custodial tasks, one item is worth noting. In particular, chaplains report spending a large amount of their time helping inmates adjust to prison (item rank = 6). To an extent, this activity may be considered a custodial task. At the least, this finding indicates that chaplains may help to manage inmates, as suggested by Cook (1994).

Perhaps more revealing are the results presented in Table 5. For example, 67% of the chaplains agreed at least slightly that they were called on to try to calm inmates down when trouble began to start (item 4). Furthermore, 4 out of 5 chaplains agreed that they would tell a correctional officer or the warden if they heard that an inmate was going to cause trouble (item 3). More than 90% of chaplains also indicated that they were happy to help correctional officers out when they needed a hand (item 2). Finally, nearly half of the respondents felt that keeping inmates from causing trouble was a concern while on the job. These findings indicate that chaplains, at least occasionally, help to control inmates.

The responses to item 5 are also revealing. When asked if "the main purpose of being a chaplain is to serve inmates, not to make the institution easier to run for prison staff," slightly more than 60% of chaplains agreed and approximately 40% disagreed. Thus, it may be argued that a majority of chaplains identifies more closely with a supportive role. Somewhat surprising, however, is the finding that 2 out of 5 chaplains disagreed with item 5. Although disagreement with this item cannot be interpreted to mean that these individuals see the purpose of their work as making the institution easier to run, it is nevertheless suggestive. At the least, it may be argued that these chaplains identify more closely with the custodial objectives of the prison staff.

In sum, these findings indicate that the chaplains' roles are not exclusively supportive and rehabilitative. Instead, it was found that chaplains occasionally perform tasks that help to effectively manage and control inmates. Still, it was also discovered that most chaplains define the main purpose of their jobs as serving inmates.

TABLE 5: Chaplains' Identification With a Custody Role (in percentages)

Item	Agree Strongly	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Mean
1. Keeping inmates from causing trouble is a major concern for me while I am on the job.	3.6	17.8	25.4	10.7	34.9	11.2	3.07
2. When correctional officers need a hand, I am happy to help them out.	28.1	46.1	17.4	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.90
3. If I heard that an inmate is going to cause trouble, I would tell a correctional officer or the warden.	21.6	41.9	17.4	6.6	10.2	2.4	4.51
4. When trouble is about to start, I am often called in to try to calm inmates down.	5.4	21.1	40.4	10.8	18.7	3.6	3.73
5. The main purpose of being a chaplain is to serve inmates, not to try to make the institution easier to run for prison staff.	8.4	35.9	16.8	13.2	22.8	3.0	3.15

NOTE: Mean for item 5 was calculated from reversed scale; high score reflects greater identification with a custody role.

ROLE PROBLEMS

Above we noted that after 1900, the chaplains' roles became ambiguous and unclear as chaplains attempted to redefine their importance in terms of their ability to meet various correctional objectives. Although the importance of the chaplaincy to the field of corrections may not be clearly established, contrary to expectations, few chaplains surveyed reported experiencing high levels of uncertainty about their work (see Table 6). Specifically, more than three fourths of the respondents agreed that they felt certain about how much authority they had at work (item 1). Similarly, over 80% of chaplains felt that there were clear, planned goals and objective for their jobs (item 2) and that their time was properly divided on the job (item 3). Furthermore, less than 5% of the respondents reported not knowing their responsibilities (item 4), and only 15% indicated that they did not know what was expected of them at work (item 5). Finally, 74% of chaplains agreed that there was clear explanation of what has to be done for their jobs (item 6).

These results do not suggest that chaplains feel a great deal of ambiguity about their roles. Without a comparison group, however, it is difficult to conclude that chaplains are less uncertain about their work than are other correctional employees or other workers generally. Nevertheless, these findings indicate that chaplains generally feel certain about their duties, the allocation of their time, relations with others, and institutional policies.

As reviewed above, there are a number of reasons to suspect that prison ministers experience role conflict on the job. In addition to being responsible for a number of divergent tasks, chaplains must negotiate a position between inmates and prison staff and balance their allegiances to church and state. The results of this analysis partially confirm this expectation. It was also discovered, however, that there is significant variation in chaplains' experiences of role conflict.

As summarized in Table 6, a full 80% of respondents agreed that they worked with two or more groups who operate quite differently (item 7), and more than 60% indicated that they did things at work that were likely to be accepted by one person but not accepted by others (item 4). In addition, approximately 3 out of 5 chaplains reported that they agree that they receive assignments without the manpower to complete them (item 1). Similarly, a majority of the respondents said that they had to do things that should be done differently (item 5).

In contrast, it should be noted that a sizable percentage of chaplains expressed disagreement with the statements contained in Table 6. Most notably, the majority of chaplains disagreed that they had to bend rules or policies to carry out their assignments (item 6). Furthermore, a majority of chaplains

TABLE 6: Chaplains' Experiences of Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict (in percentages)

Item	Agree Strongly	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Mean
Role ambiguity							
1. I feel certain about how much authority I have.	16.1	42.4	20.1	8.9	10.7	1.8	2.61
2. There are clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.	21.3	39.1	21.8	6.7	8.9	2.2	2.49
3. I know I have divided my time properly.	8.5	44.8	28.3	12.6	4.5	1.3	2.64
4. I know what my responsibilities are.	40.0	44.9	10.2	3.1	1.8	0.0	1.82
5. I know exactly what is expected of me.	15.7	51.1	17.5	9.0	5.8	0.9	2.41
6. Explanation is clear of what has to be done.	10.3	43.3	20.5	8.9	14.7	2.2	2.81
Role conflict							
1. I receive assignments without the manpower to complete them.	10.8	24.2	25.1	13.9	20.6	5.4	3.74
2. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.	3.2	16.3	26.7	19.5	27.1	7.2	3.27
3. I work on unnecessary things.	2.2	14.2	27.6	12.9	37.3	5.8	3.14
4. I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.	7.3	33.6	24.5	12.3	20.0	2.3	3.89
5. I have to do things that should be done differently.	4.5	19.7	33.2	13.5	26.5	2.7	3.54
6. I have to bend a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.	0.9	10.3	17.9	15.2	36.8	18.8	2.67
7. I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.	19.1	44.1	17.7	5.9	10.9	2.3	4.48

NOTE: Role conflict scale has been reversed so that higher mean scores reflect greater feelings of role conflict.

TABLE 7: Role Ambiguity Index and Role Conflict Index Regressed on Individual Characteristics, Work-Related Variables, Supervisory Support, and Sense of Calling

Variable	Role Ambiguity		Role Conflict	
	Beta	Significance	Beta	Significance
Age	-.135	.052	-.020	.798
Education	.156	.017	.242	.001
Race (1 = non-White)	-.123	.059	-.125	.089
Gender (1 = female)	-.060	.339	-.090	.198
Calling to chaplaincy	.114	.084	-.102	.165
Experience	.001	.992	-.078	.306
Security level (maximum)	.023	.709	-.001	.993
Supervisory support	-.505	.000	-.370	.000

NOTE: Role ambiguity model summary: $N = 174$; $F = 11.188$, significance of $F = .000$; $R^2 = .342$; adjusted $R^2 = .312$. Role conflict model summary: $N = 174$; $F = 5.570$; significance of $F = .000$; $R^2 = .212$; adjusted $R^2 = .174$.

disagreed that they received incompatible requests at work (item 2) and worked on unnecessary things (item 3). Viewed together, these results reveal that chaplains have diverse work experiences, at least with regard to role conflict. Again, however, it is difficult to determine whether chaplains experience higher levels of role conflict than other correctional employees do without the benefit of a comparison group.

SOURCES OF ROLE PROBLEMS

Table 7 reports the results of regressing the individual characteristics and work-related variables on role ambiguity and role conflict. Both models were statistically significant, with the independent variables explaining 31% of the variation in role ambiguity and 17% of the variation in role conflict.

Two of the individual variables examined here emerged as significant predictors of role problems. Specifically, it was discovered that feelings of role ambiguity declined with age, although this effect was not seen in the model predicting role conflict. It was also found that education affected both chaplains' feelings of role ambiguity and role conflict, with more educated chaplains reporting higher levels of role problems. Neither race nor gender significantly influenced chaplains' experiences of role problems, although race approached statistical significance in both models, with non-Whites being less likely to experience role problems. Finally, feeling called to the chaplaincy did not significantly affect role problems, although this variable approached statistical significance in the model predicting role ambiguity.

The effects of three work-related variables were also examined: work experience, working in a maximum security prison, and supervisory support. Consistent with Van Voorhis et al.'s (1991) research, we found that role ambiguity and role conflict were not significantly influenced by work experience or by working in a maximum security prison. In contrast, supervisory support was found to reduce both role conflict and role ambiguity. Furthermore, supervisory support had the largest influence on role problems, with chaplains who feel supported by their supervisors reporting less role ambiguity and role conflict. Thus, this research confirms that social supports play an important part in shaping correctional employees' work experiences.

DISCUSSION

This research reveals that chaplains perform a diverse range of activities in the modern prison. The most widely performed tasks include counseling inmates, coordinating religious programs, paperwork, supervising volunteers, and performing religious services. Efforts to categorize these activities indicated that beyond their religious duties, chaplains spend a significant amount of time on administrative activities and on providing inmates with services.

In some respects, these results also support the idea that chaplains help to control inmates and to serve the needs of the institution. For instance, it was found that chaplains spend a sizable part of their time helping inmates adjust to prison. In addition, the majority of chaplains said that they were called on to help calm inmates down, that they helped COs when they needed a hand, and that they would tell a CO or the warden if they learned that an inmate was going to cause trouble. In contrast, it was also discovered that chaplains spend a significant portion of their time providing services to inmates. It is also revealing that 60% of chaplains agreed that the main purpose of being a chaplain was to serve inmates, not to make the prison easier to run. Together, these findings suggest that the role of the chaplain is complex and resists simplistic characterizations. Furthermore, these findings indicate that chaplains balance the biblical call to minister to inmates with the need to function in an institution of social control.

A comparison of these findings with previous research on chaplains suggests that the chaplain's role has not changed substantially since the 1950s. Furthermore, the results do not diverge meaningfully from the picture of the chaplaincy painted by historical accounts. These findings tend to suggest then that the main parameters of the chaplain's role has largely stabilized. Still, some change is apparent: Chaplains now report spending a large portion

of their time coordinating religious programs and supervising volunteers. Thus, this research provides evidence that the chaplaincy is becoming more administrative in nature. Consistent with Fewell's (1995) suggestions, the modern chaplaincy appears to be less about doing church than it once was. Although chaplains continue to see conducting religious services as an important aspect of their work, prison ministers typically devote less time to spiritual tasks than to administrative/organizational tasks and inmates services. Also consistent with Fewell (1995) is the finding that chaplains report spending most of their time counseling inmates, coordinating religious programs, and supervising volunteers. These results tend to confirm that chaplains have taken on the coordination of religious programs and the supervision of volunteers to maintain their positions in the prisons.

These apparently contradictory observations—that the chaplaincy has changed little over time, yet chaplains are now spending more time managing religious programs and volunteers—may be reconciled by arguing that a qualitative shift has again occurred in the chaplaincy. Over time, the tasks of chaplains have remained consistent (although the scope of the chaplaincy has certainly been reduced since the 19th century). Yet, the relevance of these activities to shifting correctional objectives has been repeatedly reinterpreted. It would appear that the chaplaincy has once more been recast to meet the economic and religious needs of the corrections system rather than radically changed. Chaplains continue to perform tasks similar to those performed by their predecessors, but contemporary chaplains now also perform activities such as supervising and recruiting volunteers, which help provide economical religious services to a population with diverse religious needs.

Despite having their work repeatedly reinterpreted, chaplains generally report low levels of role ambiguity. More support was found for the expectation that chaplains experience high levels of role conflict. Still, chaplains' experiences of role ambiguity and role conflict were not uniform. Role ambiguity and role conflict varied by the individual characteristics of chaplains, such as their ages, their levels of education, and, to an extent, their races. Most critical in determining whether chaplains found their roles ambiguous and conflicting, however, was whether they had supervisors in the prison that were supportive of them and of their work. This finding is consistent with the general research on correctional employees (see e.g., Cullen et al., 1985; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986), which in turn suggests that chaplains' work experiences are similar to those of other prison employees.

This research has attempted to address an oversight in the literature on correctional employees by exploring the roles and work experiences of prison chaplains. Although the quantitative approach taken here has illuminated some key issues pertaining to the roles of chaplains, further qualitative

research would help to contextualize these findings. For example, it would be useful to learn more about the extent to which chaplains act proactively or are asked by prison staff to defuse situations in which inmates threaten to disrupt institutional order. Similarly, qualitative research may be better able to assess the extent to which chaplains are advocates and sources of support for inmates. Finally, although the task analysis revealed that counseling inmates is the activity on which chaplains spend most of their time and that they feel is their most important duty, little is known about the content of these counseling sessions. Consequently, there is a need to develop a fuller understanding of the types of counseling methods chaplains use and the extent to which this counseling is spiritual. An analysis of this type might begin to shed light on Glaser's (1964) intriguing findings about the importance of the chaplain to inmate adjustment and rehabilitation.

NOTES

1. Within the past 20 years, a research agenda has been established to examine the work experiences of correctional officers (see Philliber, 1987, for a review of this body of research). More recently, attention has expanded to include the work experiences of wardens (Cullen, Latessa, Burton, & Lombardo, 1993; Cullen, Latessa, Kopache, Lombardo, & Burton, 1993; Grieser, 1988; Johnson, Bennett, & Flanagan, 1997; Kincaide & Leone, 1992a, 1992b).

2. This theoretical framework parallels the importation and prisonization models of inmate behavior (see, e.g., Clemmer, 1940; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Shrag, 1961; Sykes, 1958).

3. Category means were calculated by taking the average of the summed item means.

4. There are methodological limitations to this comparison. Most significantly, the two samples were asked to rate the amount of time spent on tasks differently, and the two samples did not rate identical lists of tasks.

5. This finding may be a methodological artifact. It is possible that the word *repent* has become antiquated and has a negative connotation. This supposition is based on the written comments of some respondents.

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