

Evaluation Report of Research at Six Community Chaplaincy Projects in England and Wales

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FOREWORD



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The Community Chaplaincy Association welcomes Dr Philip Whitehead's report based on his considerable knowledge of the field and his specific research of 6 Community Chaplaincies. These were chosen to be representative and together they show both common direction and interesting differences in approach. The research is a starting point for further evaluation of the distinctive contribution we make as organisations with a clear faith / multi-faith ethos.

The report makes interesting and encouraging reading for those of us who are involved. It provides us with a fresh perspective that comes from someone who is rigorous in his academic and research based approach but can apply it from a platform of many years' experience as a practitioner in the Probation Service. Dr Philip Whitehead is clearly intrigued by the "religious question" and he is sympathetic to the potential of our faith ethos to do good work for our clients and for society. However he is himself neutral and his own faith is one which chooses to enquire rather than adhere to a particular faith tradition.

His report reminds us of the distinctiveness of our faith motivation that leads us to a "*Value rational*" position of prioritising the "personal one-to-one approach ... who cares for the individual and wants to support them" This differentiates us from the more "*Instrumentally rational*" approach increasingly found elsewhere in the Criminal Justice System. And he rightly positions Community Chaplaincy as "indubitably *in* the criminal justice system but most certainly not *of* it".

He cites a considerable range of research literature built up from the 1960's onwards to show the importance of the supportive personal relationship to desistance from continued crime and supports our conviction that unconditional support for the individual will yield results that the Society and this Government seeks in terms of reducing crime overall.

We hope in the next 2 or 3 years to have quality research evidence that will help to convince others. And we look forward to an increasing partnership with funding organisations, Dr Philip Whitehead and the University of Teesside to achieve this.

Kevin Armstrong
Chair

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CONTENTS

A] INTRODUCTION -----	6
Ai] Research preliminaries	6
Aii] Unravelling the Canadian gene code of community chaplaincy	6
Aiii] Epiphany in Ottawa	7
Aiv] Religion and criminal justice in England and Wales	9
Av] Community chaplaincy begins in Swansea	10
B] RESEARCH LITERATURE ON RELIGION AND CRIME -----	12
Bi] Impact of religion on delinquent and criminal behaviours	12
Bii] Religious sensibilities and faith-based interventions	13
C] BACKGROUND TO AND GENESIS OF COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY RESEARCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES -----	16
Ci] Genesis of research project	16
Cii] Research planning and creating the sample.....	17
Ciii] Research procedure and data collection instruments	18
Civ] Six community chaplaincy locations visited	19
D] RESEARCH FINDINGS -----	22
Di] The rationale of community chaplaincy	22
Dii] Added Value	23
Diii] Clarifying and realising the vision.....	24
Div] Big Society and Rehabilitation Revolution	24
Dv] Prevailing issues and profile of prisoners.....	26
Dvi] Volunteers	27
Dvii] Funding (and payment by results)	29
Dviii] Data Summary	31
E] THEORETICAL EXPLORATION and the CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING -----	33
F] CONTRIBUTION of COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY to the CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM	35
Fi] Provide unconditional support for ex-prisoners – a question of values	35
Fii] Reduce reoffending through supportive relationships.....	36
Fiii] Political engagement and social justice	37
G] CONCLUSION -----	39
Gi] A corrective to bureaucratic procedures and punitive passions	39
Gii] Developmental issues and some questions	39
H] REFERENCES -----	41

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of this research was to establish an exploratory understanding of community chaplaincy and the space it currently occupies in the criminal justice system of England and Wales at the end of its first decade (2001-2011). This exploration was pursued through visiting six community chaplaincy projects where 22 interviews were conducted over six months (November 2010-April 2011) on what is arguably a significant yet relatively under-researched phenomenon. These data reveal a person-centred, theologically-informed, value-driven, and voluntary-charitable organisation which operates within a multi-faith ethos. It offers supportive relationships to men, women, and young people (Feltham) at the point they leave custodial institutions **(Di)**. Some who leave custody are the subject of licence conditions that stipulate regular contact with probation; others are not subjected to statutory requirements. Even though projects are distinguishable from other organisational domains by their faith ethos, this does not mean that all volunteers who work for community chaplaincy are people of faith or that they belong to faith communities **(Dvi)** a difference with Canada and also Swansea). Nevertheless community chaplaincy projects require that volunteers are aware of and sympathetic to its distinctive faith orientation. Community chaplaincy does not attempt to proselytise offenders; rather supportive relationships are offered unconditionally to people of faith and none when they leave custody.

Community chaplaincy, because of its faith orientation and value-driven nature, is more vocation than job which facilitates added value **(Dii)**. It also offers hope to people who, as a consequence of their offending, have acquired the negative status of labelled offender, prisoner, or even ex-prisoner. It operates with a person-in-situation mentality to counter-balance those punitive, de-humanising, and depersonalising tendencies which have colonised criminal justice over recent years (Bell 2011; Hudson 1993; Whitehead 2010). Its vision **(Diii)** is to walk with marginalised and excluded ex-prisoners on a difficult journey because of accumulated problems compounded since unpropitious childhood experiences: family conflict, insecurity, vulnerability, impoverished education, unstable work record, substance abuse, financial problems, and sub-standard accommodation. To people immured in such adverse social circumstances community chaplaincy is a conduit of hope and support as they return to an uncertain future in the community **(Dv)**. Arguably within the contemporary rehabilitation revolution, community chaplaincy has exemplified the Big Society for a decade **(Div)**, but concerns were expressed about what this concept actually means. The voluntary sector in general, and faith sector in particular, may well receive encouragement to get more involved in the criminal justice system by central government, but adequate resources are required and funding is a pressing issue for community chaplaincy projects **(Dvii)**.

A] INTRODUCTION

Ai] Research preliminaries

There is a well established association between religion as a correctional intervention, the emergence and reform of prisons, and other features of criminal justice formation. Religion influenced the origin of the penal system in America with its differential manifestations in the Quaker Philadelphia separate system and the Calvinist silent system. Canadian penitentiaries reach back to the 19th century when the reformative efficacy of religion upon the incarcerated was a distinguishable feature when crime resonated with sin. Religious influences stimulated prison reform in England and Wales as well as the emergence of probation (Whitehead and Statham 2006), so that “religion has been a major force in shaping the ways in which offenders are dealt with” (Garland 1990: 203). Accordingly the aim of this research-informed evaluation report is structured within this historical tradition which continues to explore the religious question within the operational functioning of contemporary criminal justice. Specifically, this will be considered through the under-researched lens of community chaplaincy which began in Canada before taking root in England and Wales. Even though chaplains from different religious traditions have been present within prisons for many years, community chaplaincy is a relatively recent development which assists ex-prisoners as they rebuild their lives following imprisonment. This report begins by tracing the origins of community chaplaincy in Canada which was informed by visiting Ottawa in September 2010¹, to which I’ll return in September 2011.

Aii] Unravelling the Canadian gene code of community chaplaincy

In 1972 the Rev. Dr. Pierre Allard was a prison chaplain when conditions in Canadian prisons were harsher than subsequently. It was explained that prisoners were isolated, existing in “a world apart”, so that the inchoate vision of community chaplaincy was

¹ Canadian Research Methodology

Six months before visiting Ottawa in September 2010, contact was established with Correctional Services Canada (CSC) HQ to inform them of the research I was planning to undertake on community chaplaincy in England and Wales. A planned visit to Canada was deemed instructive to observe community chaplaincy in its country of origin, and that this would be enhanced by conversations with those involved in its organisation and delivery. Therefore during a ten day period I was enabled by staff at CSC to undertake 13 interviews of which 11 were located in Ottawa and two in British Columbia, Western Canada. The 13 interviews comprised four members of staff at CSC, as well as a community chaplaincy coordinator in Ottawa where the facility is known as MAP - Mentoring-Aftercare-Presence. Other interviews included a representative of the Alpha Christian organisation that has contact with serving prisoners; a prison chaplain at a Detention Centre; visits to the founder and Director of Jericho Road Ministries that provides accommodation for ex-prisoners, in addition to the Harvest House drug recovery program. Understanding was further informed by participating in a video conference with one of only two full-time community chaplains in Canada, and a telephone interview with the coordinator of Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) which also conforms to a religiously-based operational model. Attendance at an “offender-friendly church” facilitated opportunities to discuss pertinent matters with the pastors. Significantly I discussed relevant matters with the Rev. Dr. Pierre Allard, the inspiration of community chaplaincy in Canada. The interviewees comprised nine males and four females. Prior to visiting I extracted information from websites on community chaplaincy in Canada, additional documentary evidence was provided before and during my stay, and a daily diary of observations, visits, contacts, and conversational asides outside of the structure of interview situations was completed. Data were not available to quantify how many people are involved in the work of community chaplaincy in Ottawa, nor was it possible to locate a research literature on this specific intervention.

shaped by a commitment to build bridges between the prison and wider human community. Specifically these bridges would be erected by faith-motivated volunteers establishing contact with serving prisoners. It was also acknowledged that prison chaplains could “not go it alone” but required volunteers to share responsibility for what is often difficult work with prisoners, many of whom have experienced unpropitious family backgrounds and seized by a surfeit of personal problems (Griffiths, Dandurand and Murdoch 2007). By 1980 Rev. Allard was a prison chaplain at the Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick, Eastern Canada, when the initial vision of community involvement with prisoners was extended to the period beyond release. The vision was uncomplicated, theologically grounded in the injunction to serve others, and concretely expressed in a commitment to build community for ex-prisoners. Fundamentally it is a vision of faith in action with people who were part of the human community before incarceration, and who often return to the same locality beyond release. Community chaplaincy does not dilute the neo-classical criminological postulate of offender responsibility and behavioural accountability, but it does affirm that communities of faith have a responsibility for *all* citizens which includes offenders. This is a theologically informed criminology which blends offender rational choice with the notion of shared well-being and mutuality. Expressed theologically “No element in the Body is dispensable or superfluous: what affects one affects all, for good and ill, since both suffering and flourishing belong to the entire organism not to any individual or purely local grouping” (Williams 2010: 25).

It should be clarified that the concept is not restricted to or synonymous with ordained ministry. There are only two full-time ordained community chaplains in Canada employed by Correctional Services Canada (none employed by NOMS), one of whom discussed pertinent matters with me in September 2010 through video conferencing facilities because of the distance between Ottawa and his location in British Columbia. Rather the dominant operational model of community chaplaincy in Canada incorporates a much wider definition because it involves predominantly people of faith who are not ordained offering support to ex-prisoners. This model has arguably more flexibility than the formal structures and strictures attendant upon ordained ministry; it has emerged from and is sustained by grass-root support; and the operational dynamic is more bottom-up than top-down. It also encourages people of different faith traditions to make a difference in the lives of ex-prisoners by volunteering their time and personal capital.

Aiii] Epiphany in Ottawa

Thirty years after community chaplaincy began in Moncton, numerous projects² are currently scattered throughout Canada providing a faith-orientated support structure between incarceration and the community. Accordingly I observed community chaplaincy in Ottawa which has been coordinated by MAP (Mentorship-Aftercare-

² In a rare research-based document published in 2006 it was stated that ‘Community chaplaincy is now an active community-based ministry throughout Canada, with twenty-six sites in the five regions’ (Cuff, 2006: 9). These sites include *Pacific*: Victoria and Vancouver CC; *Prairies*: Mustard Seed, Edmonton, and Saskatoon; *Ontario*: Peterborough, Toronto, Kingston (and Ottawa); *Quebec*: Montreal, South West, Project Oxygen; *Atlantic*: Moncton and Charlottetown community chaplaincies. By 2011 there were approximately 37 community chaplaincy projects in Canada.

Presence) since 2000. MAP is constituted as a non-profit, faith-based organisation, comprising two coordinators who provide training to people from faith communities who volunteer their services to prisoners exiting the prison system of eastern Ontario. It was explained that most volunteers are professional people with “passion in their hearts”. The primary function of MAP is to provide a supportive presence to people leaving prison by assisting them to lead a new life by addressing their diverse needs which are *physical* (housing, employment, training and education); *social* (family, health, addictions, violence and anger); and *spiritual* (prayer, the need to belong, and providing a church home). One of the MAP coordinators explained that community chaplaincy surrounds the released offender with “things in the community they never had before”, and its operational structure is as follows.

First the two MAP coordinators, located in office accommodation several miles from down-town Ottawa, receive referrals on prisoners considering involvement with community chaplaincy beyond release. Referrals are made by the prison chaplain at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) a provincial facility which holds approximately 500 inmates, and Alpha, a volunteer Christian organisation which visits OCDC prisoners at weekends. Referrals are also made by chaplains in prisons beyond Ottawa (Kingston, Kitchener, and Gravenhurst federal institutions) in addition to which inmates’ families have been known to contact MAP. The 85% males and 15% females referred have numerous physical, social, and spiritual needs, in addition to bearing the scars of addictions and troublesome family backgrounds. An expression of faith by serving prisoners is not a prerequisite, but all those referred are assessed by MAP coordinators.

Second, upon release MAP surrounds the focal member with support provided by three volunteer coaches drawn from diverse faith communities. MAP expects focal members to be an active member of the coaching team for at least three months after leaving prison, but then support is available indefinitely. The focal member must remain committed to staying out of prison, and accept help from their coaches at weekly meetings. Additionally focal members are able to telephone their coaches in “crisis situations” and relationships are “based on the offender wanting to stay in touch”. Even though MAP has clear expectations of its focal members, the principle of voluntarism is fundamental. Consequently community chaplaincy operates independently of the formal statutory requirements of state apparatuses through its parole and probation officers. Whilst some of its funding is provided contractually by CSC, MAP is supported by grants from private foundations and individual donors. Within this operational context coaches surrounding the focal member provide a listening ear, support, and act as role models in the art of law-abiding citizenship.

Third, focal members are signposted towards a range of services facilitated by the Ottawa Inner City Ministries: drop-in centres; the provision of meals and clothing; mental health services; shelters for men and women; and resources provided by the Salvation Army, Elizabeth Fry, and John Howard organisations. I visited Jericho Road ministries and the Harvest House drug recovery facility. All these are illustrative of partnerships between MAP, volunteer coaches, and local faith-based community resources. However there is some distance to travel before all the churches in Ottawa display the “offender friendly” tag. It may be noted there is a Prison Network Group (PNG) at OCDC and an Ex-Offender Friendly Faith Community Initiative (EFFCI). One

respondent said that “PNG has worked hard to identify faith communities that we know we can confidently refer people to and so we’ve got 30 to 35 faith communities, churches, in this area. We offer to train them and work with them to mentor ex-offenders”. In fact “we are always looking for new churches and Mosques where we can refer people to”.

Aiv] Religion and criminal justice in England and Wales

The renaissance of the *religious question* in England and Wales has arguably occurred in conjunction with criminal justice re-formation stimulated by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), circa 2003/2004. NOMS established the operational conditions whereby public, private, and third sector organisations can contest for the business of providing services to offenders, a principle enshrined within the Offender Management Act 2007. Even though the competitive dynamics of NOMS may enhance levels of performance in public sector organisations, previous New Labour governments after 1997 increasingly encouraged the third sector, which includes multi-faith traditions, to get more involved. During the autumn of 2003 the Home Office established the Faith Communities Unit which was responsible for the document Working Together. It was asserted that:

The Christian Churches have had an immense historic influence in shaping society, and make significant contributions in a wide range of areas such as community development, education, social inclusion and heritage. For these reasons, the Churches have made and continue to make a particular and distinctive contribution to the development and implementation of Government policy in certain areas (Home Office 2004: 7).

It was also affirmed that government cannot promote citizenship, reduce re-offending, or promote community cohesion by itself, which is why it must seek alliances with, as one example, The Faith and Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance (NOMS 2005). One specific manifestation of partnership is community chaplaincy which:

provides a bridge between prison and the community. It takes prisoners from the gate and supports them as they start their new lives, building the links between churches and the community. There are now 10 community chaplaincies in existence and 11 more in development. Community chaplaincy is not the creation of Government. It has grown up from the grass roots, and we must nurture it. It is an initiative to which many faith groups, not just Christian, are contributing (Clarke 2005: 7).

Approximately 10 years ago community chaplaincy migrated across the Atlantic and made landfall in Swansea. By 2010 the Community Chaplaincy Association of England and Wales had established its own dedicated website providing details of 12 projects located at Feltham, Wandsworth, and Wormwood Scrubs in London; also Leicester, Manchester, Staffordshire, Nottingham, North East, Exeter, Lewes, Swansea, and Leeds. In fact more are being planned to create a national network of support for released prisoners which utilise the resources of local churches, as well as other faith traditions, volunteers and mentors. The vision is to help ex-prisoners to *achieve successful re-entry by offering support and services to free themselves from crime and build a brighter future in the community*. By March 2011 there were 18 projects from

Durham to the South West comprised of 50 paid staff and 487 volunteers, none of whom are employed by NOMS.

This initiative resonates with the Big Society articulated by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government formed in May 2010, and a market-driven ideology that enables the public, private, and voluntary sectors to compete with each other to provide offender services within a Rehabilitation Revolution (Ministry of Justice 2010). Therefore one should not underestimate the importance being attached to the involvement of community chaplaincy with the context of state and accompanying criminal justice re-formation which is currently underway in England and Wales.

Community chaplaincy is separate from, but linked to, multi-faith chaplaincy arrangements within the prison system in England and Wales. Some are located within prison establishments, others beyond the gate. Critically they work alongside, but also utilise and mobilise, community-based volunteers to achieve numerous objectives: to support people at the point of release from prison to lead a crime free life; build safer communities; protect the public and reduce the number of victims. Moreover these objectives will be achieved by responding to the accommodation needs of ex-prisoners; provide opportunities to achieve the requisite skills to enhance employment opportunities; advice on finances, benefits, substance abuse, physical and mental health issues; address attitudes, thinking, and behaviours; to provide pastoral counselling and support consistent with the values traditionally associated with faith communities. It has already been mentioned that the first community chaplaincy appeared in Swansea.

Av] Community chaplaincy begins in Swansea

During a visit to Swansea community chaplaincy on the 1st April 2011³, David Emery clarified that numerous factors coalesced to establish the first community chaplaincy in Swansea by 2001: the influence of a Roman Catholic nun at Swansea who lamented the return of people to prison; similar concerns were being expressed by the then part-time chaplaincy team within Swansea prison; the Assistant General Chaplain, Rev. Bob Payne, had discovered some information on community chaplaincy in Canada and became a Champion for the project; a visit to the United Kingdom during Autumn 1999 by Reverend Rod Carter, the CSC Regional Chaplain for Ontario when seminars were held in different parts of the country on community chaplaincy; a further visit by Reverend John Tonks, CSC Regional Chaplain for Atlantic Region in 2000 to speak at several venues on the Canadian situation (David Emery and Reverend Lionel Hopkins, Swansea Prison Chaplain, attended one of these talks). Consequently “coming back from that talk we felt that this was something that we could do in Swansea”. Finally, and significantly, David Emery considered that this was something which he had to do (a divine burden) and following a visit to Canada in June 2001, facilitated by the

³ This research visit to Swansea provided opportunities to hold two meetings with David Emery who had been involved with community chaplaincy since its beginnings in 2001, a period of ten years. His valued insights into the project complement those of Pierre Allard in Canada. I also benefited from reading the following document by Grayton, Davey, Williams, Luscombe and Brook (2008) *Swansea Community Chaplaincy Project: Evaluation of the Swansea CC Project at HMP Swansea October 2006 to March 2008*, University of Kent.

Millennium Awards Scheme of 2000, community chaplaincy was initially established in Swansea. To date it has been in existence for over a decade but “still has a long way to evolve. So we are not the finished product but I believe we are well down that road. Community chaplaincy is a group of like-minded people at Swansea, employed by respective faith communities, who collectively are working as community chaplains”.

(PW) But why did you want to get involved with community chaplaincy?

(DE) “It gets down to what is your drive, what is your motivation. If I was in this to make money, for an easy ride, I would have been out of it nine and a half years ago. You are in it because there is a conviction as a person of faith to what you are doing is what you are requested, led, to do”.

Therefore after a period of ten years it was considered both appropriate and necessary to explore the phenomenon of community chaplaincy in England and Wales, which culminated in this research project. Before explaining the methodology of the research and presenting salient findings, I turn to what is a considerable history of the impact of religion on delinquent and adult criminal behaviour. This situates the research within what is an extensive literature.

B] RESEARCH LITERATURE ON RELIGION AND CRIME

Bi] Impact of religion on delinquent and criminal behaviours

William Kvaraceus, Assistant Superintendent of Schools of Passaic, New Jersey, reached back to the 1930s to studies which examined the relationship between religious training, beliefs, and behaviour. His own study comprised 761 delinquents (563 boys and 198 girls) referred to the Passaic Children's Bureau during a five year period before 1944. Most of these delinquents claimed affiliation with a church, but only 54% attended regularly. Therefore with half the delinquents the church could not be expected to have much impact because of their tenuous links. At the same time:

it is significant that the 54% reported as regularly attending, in spite of this steady religious affiliation, did not appear deterred from exhibiting aggressive-delinquent behaviour. As various investigators have already indicated, this may point to the lack of any positive relationship between religious knowledge or attitudes and moral behaviour (1944: 286).

Two decades later Travis Hirschi (1969) theorised that young people don't offend because they have something to lose, a consequence of socialisation into the normative values of society which facilitate effective mechanisms of social control. The salient factor for Hirschi's control theory is the level of attachment, commitment to, and belief in the conventional moral order established through the structures of family, school, peer groups, and the workplace. Importantly, says Tierney, 'By asking the question, "Why do we not break the law", control theory is suggesting that something special happens to prevent people acting out whatever impulses they may possess' (2006: 205). Accordingly when exploring the religious question, this *something special* incorporates religious attitudes and influences, the activity of a spiritual dimension, or perhaps attending church which engenders conformity to acceptable moral and legal codes. Even though this thesis was earlier undermined by Kvaraceus, perhaps Hirschi would lend it support.

Towards the end of the 1960s Hirschi in conjunction with Stark (1969) wrote an intriguingly named paper, *Hellfire and Delinquency*. The research question was: can the prospect of hellfire for those guilty of falling short of acceptable legal and moral norms serve as a deterrent? The authors obtained data from a sample of 4077 students entering public junior and senior high schools of Western Contra Costa County, California, during the autumn of 1964, when they completed a questionnaire which included measures of delinquency and religiosity. Even though they acknowledged previous studies which revealed a weak relationship between church attendance and non-delinquent behaviours, Hirschi and Stark were unambiguous that religion does not deter. They concluded that "For all intents and purposes, then, church attendance does not affect acceptance of the moral values assumed to be important deterrents of delinquency" (1969: 205). They received support from Burkett and White (1974), but also refutation (Albrecht, Chadwick and Alcorn, 1977), and conflicting findings emerged (Higgins and Albrecht, 1977). Nevertheless, Jensen and Erickson (1979) indicated that church attendance had some impact upon delinquency.

Other studies suggested that being involved in religious activities was associated with not engaging in offending behaviour. Travers and Davies (1961) concluded that

delinquents were much less orientated towards religion than their delinquent-free counterparts. This perspective received support from Rhodes and Reiss (1970) who claimed that delinquency varies with religious orientation and church attendance. For example:

White boys with no religious preference have almost twice as high a delinquency rate (132/1,000) as all white boys having religious preference (72/1,000) after the rates have been adjusted for occupational status, subject and parent religious participation, age, and family structure (1970: 94).

Therefore religious orientation cannot be discounted, even though caution was counselled when interpreting the findings. Nevertheless the authors stated that their study supported “the notion that there is a ‘religious factor’ in delinquent and truant behaviour” (1970: 98).

Intriguingly Rodney Stark (1996) returned to the aforementioned *Hellfire and Delinquency* article he’d written with Hirschi nearly 30 years previously. The original article undermined the orthodox theological assumption, combined with control theory, that one would find a positive relationship between religion, church attendance, and delinquency prevention. Therefore “the word quickly spread that kids on their way home from Sunday school were as likely to strip your car as were kids on their way home from the pool hall” (1996: 163). By the 1990s Stark arrived at a modified view after clarifying that the earlier stance was misleading because social and moral contexts differ between geographical locations. This insight allowed Stark to press home a more sociological than psychological explanation of how religion facilitates conformity. In other words conformity occurs if one conceives of religion as a social structure, or group property, rather than an individual psychological trait. Consequently even though studies in Oregon and California did not find the hellfire effect, studies in other areas were more promising. The modified thesis of Stark was that “Religious individuals will be less likely than those who are not religious to commit delinquent acts, but only in communities where the majority of people are actively religious” (1996: 163). This resonates with differential association theory where conduct is learned and reinforced by being exposed to a preponderance of specific cultural, spiritual, and religious influences.

Bii] Religious sensibilities and faith-based interventions

It is pertinent at this point to refer to Johnson (2004) who differentiates between two approaches which facilitates the transition from religious influences and affiliations, to specific faith-based interventions. First, *organic religion* directs attention to the impact of religious sensibilities on behaviour and asserts that “consistent and growing evidence makes it increasingly obvious that religious commitment and involvement help protect youth from delinquent behaviour and deviant activities” (2004: 331). Even though adult research is less common than delinquency research in this field, he claims a similar pattern between the two age groups concerning the efficacy of religion. Second, Johnson turns to *intentional or programmatic religion* where interventions are designed to address behavioural problems, such as addictive behaviours in prison settings to effect rehabilitation. Johnson clarifies that there are more organic compared to faith-based intervention studies, and the latter may have

an advantage over secular programmes (2004: 333). Furthermore there are studies from the United States on the benefits of religion and faith-based programmes to reduce infractions during imprisonment. Clear and Myhre (1995) found that prisoner involvement in religious activities assisted psychological adjustment, and Clear et al. (2000) concluded that religious influences prevent dehumanisation. Other relevant studies include Camp et al. (2008), Clear and Sumter (2002), Mears et al., (2006), O'Connor and Perreyclear, (2002). Therefore the benefit of religion should not solely be judged by its rehabilitative efficacy after release.

When turning from the benefits of religion within the prison environment to the impact of faith-based interventions beyond release, O'Connor and Duncan (2008) confirm that most studies have appeared during the last ten years. However before alluding to these studies the caveat should be included that methodological problems have sometimes obstructed definitive conclusions on their impact. Some of these problems touch upon the complexity of isolating a specific faith component of an intervention within prison which transforms law-breaking into law-abiding attitudes (is it bible study, prayer, or pastoral counselling?). Related difficulties are not using random sampling, concerns over reliability and validity, an absence of longitudinal data, and the reminder that "research methodology can have an important effect on research findings" (Johnson, LI, Larson and McCullough 2000: 46). Other methodological deficiencies are little use of control groups, self-selection bias (a positive effect could be explained by how participants are selected rather than programme effect), and limited measures of impact (Mears, Roman, Woolf and Buck 2006: 359). It is also important to clarify whether we are considering interventions with delinquents or adults, males or females, prison based and/or post-release impacts. Finally a faith-based intervention programme which specifically utilises bible study, prayer, perhaps spiritual counselling, is conceptually different to people of faith being motivated to assist with educational and addiction services. These features expose research complexities which account for the inconclusive nature of some of the findings (and raise pertinent issues for those pursuing community chaplaincy research studies; the SPIDER assessment tool was introduced as a response).

O'Connor and Duncan (2008) return our thinking to specific faith-based interventions in conjunction with 'What Works' by citing Aos et al. (2006) who reviewed the evidence on 'What Works' (and what does not) from 291 evaluations in the USA and other English speaking countries over a 35 year period. This review is significant because it constitutes "the most succinct and methodologically sound summary of the research to date" (O'Connor and Duncan 2008: 88). Pertinently it includes six evaluations of faith-based interventions, five of which were grouped together because they promoted Christianity amongst prisoners to reduce recidivism beyond the prison walls. Aos et al. (2006) concluded that four out of five studies did not have a programme effect: O'Connor et al. (1997); Burnside et al. (2001); Trusty and Eisenberg (2003); and Johnson (2004). One reason for this could be that they were not adequately aligned to the principles of 'What Works' (O'Connor and Duncan, 2008; O'Connor, Duncan and Quillard, 2006), and more research is required of sufficient

methodological rigour. By contrast the Wilson et al. (2005) study did find a programme effect⁴.

Therefore, even though the accumulated evidence demands cautious evaluation, the relationship between religion and offending cannot be dismissed as irrelevant (Baier and Wright, 2001). Notwithstanding the critical review of Aos et al. (2006) religion has value within prison (O'Connor and Perreyclear, 2002), faith-based interventions can conduce to rehabilitation if coupled with substance abuse treatment, educational and employment services (McKean and Ransford, 2004), and aligned with the principles of 'What Works' (O'Connor, Duncan and Quillard, 2006). There is some evidence that prison chaplains can positively influence post-release outcomes (Sundt, Dammer and Cullen 2002: 61) and religiously-inspired, community oriented Circles of Support and Accountability benefit sex offenders after release from prison (Wilson, Cortoni and McWhinnie, 2009). However the point at which prisoners re-enter society is critical. Accordingly it is expected that the relatively new phenomenon of community chaplaincy can make an effective contribution to post-release outcomes, to which I now turn.

⁴ Additional Research Literature

Within the scope of two articles Tom O'Connor (2004a, 2004b) acknowledges a copious research literature which addresses the question: *does religion work as a correctional intervention?* After clarifying there's more research on juveniles than adults, Knudten and Knudten (1971) reviewed the literature from 1913-1970 before concluding that research is lacking in the religion and corrections field. Tittle and Welch (1983) reviewed 65 studies but only ten did not show a significant negative relationship between religion and deviance. Ellis (1985) included 32 studies of which five revealed no effect and 27 a reduced effect. Sumter (1999) examined 23 published studies of which five showed no effect but 18 demonstrated evidence of a statistically significant inverse relationship between religion and deviance. However there are methodological difficulties, so caution is required when evaluating these data. Next, Johnson, De LI, Larson and McCullough (2000) completed a systematic literature review of articles pertinent to religion and delinquency published between January 1985 and December 1997. Out of 40 studies one suggested religion increased delinquency, one failed to specify an effect, three demonstrated a mixed effect, five showed no effect, but 30 demonstrated negative or reduced effects. Again methodological weaknesses are acknowledged. Subsequently Baier and Wright's (2001) literature review on the effect of religion on crime included 60 studies published between 1969 and 1998. They concluded that there is cogent evidence that religion can have a positive effect on reducing crime. Hirschi and Stark (1969) may well have been unexpectedly gloomy when advancing the view that religion does not act as a deterrent, but "Our findings give confidence that religion does indeed have some deterrent effect" (Baier and Wright 2001: 16). Accordingly there are empirical reasons for guarded optimism that cultivating religious sensibilities, in addition to faith-based interventions informed by the principles of What Works, can have positive effects within the prison environment and subsequently rehabilitative impacts beyond release. Notwithstanding the tantalising question of *how* this works (attending religious services, spirituality, foster community, church attendance, becoming more aware of self and others, relationships between faith communities and offenders), it offers encouragement to community chaplaincy even though it is not a phenomenon mentioned in these surveys of the literature.

C] BACKGROUND TO AND GENESIS OF COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY RESEARCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Ci] Genesis of research project

The genesis of this research project can be traced to accumulated factors which are gathered together as follows:

- Probation and criminal justice research have periodically alluded to the salient themes of religion and the ethical doctrine of personalism (Whitehead and Statham 2006; Whitehead 2007, 2010). Accordingly there is a religious question, a discernible set of issues and questions, requiring exploration within the criminal justice system.
- The emergence of community chaplaincy in Canada during the early 1980s before migrating to England and Wales in 2001. However it is an under-researched field of enquiry in both countries (Dwight Cuff confirmed to the author on the 6.4.2011: “You are right, there is a dearth of research in the field”).
- A decade of political statements and associated documentation on religion and criminal justice in England and Wales, in conjunction with encouragement offered to third sector faith communities⁵.

⁵ **Chronological overview of some salient documents:** *Through the Prison Gate* (HMI Prisons, 2001) a thematic review which acknowledged that resettlement is an issue of complexity and concern, specifically recidivism. A national strategy on resettlement to reduce recidivism was advocated which should involve better coordination between prisons and probation services. Importantly at *paragraph 3.5* the review states that for many years non-governmental organisations, prison chaplains, prison visitors, and different faith traditions, have contributed to resettlement (it was too early to mention community chaplaincy). Next *Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners* (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002) and more recently the *Bromley Briefings Prison Fact File* (Prison Reform Trust, 2009) includes a profile of people in prison and concerns about recidivism: 47% of adults are reconvicted within one year of being released from prison, and for those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 60%. The figures are more problematic for young offenders: 74% sentenced to youth custody and 68% of young people on community sentences reoffend within 12 months (Ministry of Justice, December 2010). Other pertinent developments worth noting include *The Inter Faith Network* for the UK, founded in 1987 to promote good relations between different faiths. The Home Office established the Faith Communities Unit in October 2003 and produced *Working Together: Cooperation between Government and Faith Communities* (Home Office, 2004) to promote engagement with faith groups. Then six months after NOMS came into existence in June 2004 a National Conference was held in November 2004 to facilitate the inchoate relationship between NOMS and the voluntary sector which was followed by a Draft Strategy: *The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NOMS* (NOMS 2005). The Draft Strategy is an important document because it takes seriously the relationship between NOMS and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations (VCS). Subsequently an Action Plan for the period 2005-2007 facilitated partnerships between the voluntary sector, prisons and probation, one being *The Faith and Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance*. In 2006 a Home Office *Five Year Strategy* document was published and at *paragraph 4.9* it is stated that government had created three alliances to develop partnerships and reduce reoffending: Civic Society Alliance with local partners; Corporate Alliance with business; Faith, Community and Voluntary Sector Alliance. Next, The Cabinet Office and HM Treasury report on *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration* (2007), followed by *Believing We Can* (NOMS 2007) which contains numerous references to community chaplaincies. *Working with the third sector to reduce reoffending: securing effective partnerships 2008-2011* (Ministry of Justice and NOMS 2008) wants to see a thriving third sector, including faith-based organisations. *Prisons with a Purpose* (Conservative Party 2008) wants to unlock expertise in the voluntary sector to

- Explorations with Clinks, York, during 2009-2010⁶ which culminated in their interest in and support for this project, and subsequent permission from NOMS and encouragement from Teesside University to pursue a field of research which has relevance for criminal *and* social justice.
- Visit to the Community Chaplaincy Association at Leicester, June 2010, to explore the feasibility of undertaking research on community chaplaincy which received a positive response.
- The added impetus provided by the emergence of a new political context in May 2010 with the election of a Conservative-Liberal coalition government. This event facilitated the re-formation of criminal justice through the Big Society, Rehabilitation Revolution, and making greater use of the third sector through a market-driven, competitive environment. This process culminated in the Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle* (Ministry of Justice 2010; see critique of this document in Whitehead 2011).

Cii] Research planning and creating the sample

By the summer of 2010 there were numerous CC locations in England and Wales which could be identified from the Community Chaplaincy Association website⁷. It was not feasible to visit all locations to undertake the research whose primary rationale was to generate understanding to elucidate the *religious question* within contemporary criminal justice. At a meeting with the CCA to clarify the purpose, parameters, and sampling procedure of the prospective research, it was decided that it would be instructive to visit six (out of the then 14) locations and interview relevant staff at: Leicester, Leeds, Manchester, Low Newton, Feltham, and Swansea. It was concluded that these six projects would provide the requisite insights to inform understanding because:

deliver rehabilitative services, which subsequently culminated in the Ministry of Justice Green Paper of December 2010, *Breaking the Cycle*.

⁶ Preliminary explorations before the research commenced included numerous visits to Clinks. Clinks, HQ in York, was established in 1998 to strengthen partnerships between voluntary and community-based organisations, prison and probation services in England and Wales. Clinks has a voice in the criminal justice system, promotes the voluntary sector, influences policy and campaigns, provides information and support, and is a member of the NOMS Management Board. Consequently because of its location within criminal justice services I had several meetings with Clinks' staff during 1999 and 2010 (Nathan Dick, Malcolm Thompson, and Clive Martin). I should single out the assistance provided by Nathan Dick who was involved in capacity building in community chaplaincy between 2006 and 2008. Additionally the Clinks' library contains numerous documents on community chaplaincy from projects at Gloucester, Bedford, Leeds, Swansea, North Staffordshire, Manchester, Feltham, and Leicester.

⁷ The Community Chaplaincy Association was established in March 2010. Its *Vision* is to provide all ex-prisoners with support and opportunities to desist from crime. Its *Mission* is to support and develop a network of multi-faith community chaplaincy projects in England and Wales to work with ex-prisoners of faith and none as they return to the community. The *Aims* of CCA are: to represent and promote community chaplaincy projects; facilitate, support and develop a network of community chaplaincies; maintain quality standards; develop a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of community chaplaincy within the criminal justice system. Accordingly this qualitative research modestly contributes to the latter aim.

- Even though they share a common rationale and vision there are differences in staffing arrangements, in addition to which some are situated within prison and others just outside or well beyond the gate
- They include community chaplaincy services being provided to adult male and female ex-prisoners, as well as a younger offenders
- They were established at different times, from Swansea in 2001 to Leicester in 2007
- Therefore by geographical location, organisational arrangements, gender and age of service users, utilising volunteers, and differential lengths of time projects have been operational, they constitute what is believed to be a representative sample of community chaplaincy work in England and Wales (non-random purposive sampling). Visits to these six locations produced 22 interviews with community chaplains and other support staff which will be clarified below. To be precise I visited 6 projects and interviewed 10 of approximately 30 (33.3%) community chaplains (which of course does not include other support staff).

Ciii] Research procedure and data collection instruments

Visits occurred and interviews were undertaken between the 2nd November 2010 and 14th April 2011. The data collection instruments included observational site visits, field notes, documents provided during visits, and a Semi-Structured Interview Schedule (SSI). Given the rationale and qualitative nature of the research project, the SSI schedule was selected to gather data in a consistent manner from the 10 community chaplains, which afforded the flexibility to deviate from the standard list of question to pursue pertinent lines of enquiry if necessary. The instrument elicited and subsequently generated understandings and meanings from the respondents' point of view. Furthermore a subset of questions from the SSI instrument was the basis for the remaining interviews with other staff members. Interviews were recorded by using a digital recorder. The categories of respondents interviewed can be clarified as follows:

Community Chaplains = 10

Project Manager/Director/Coordinator/Lead = 6

Project Workers (support staff and ETE worker) = 5

Volunteer Coordinator = 2

(23, not 22, because one Community Chaplain doubled up as Project Manager)

After the qualitative data had been collected by the 14.4.2011 they were subsequently transcribed and analysed. Before presenting salient findings it is instructive to present a brief profile of the six community chaplaincy projects visited.

Civ] Six community chaplaincy locations visited

Leicester Futures Unlocked, located in office buildings in Leicester city centre near the Leicester Magistrates' Court.

Project commencement – 2007

Number of referrals since 2007 – 518

Number mentored since project began – 106

Number being mentored November 2010 – 19

Number of volunteers November 2010 – 25

Sources of funding – Lloyds TSB, Tudor Trust, Lankelly Chase, Esmee Fairbairn, Garfield Weston, Church Urban Fund, Local Councils, Police, and individual donations

Prisons – Leicester, Glen Parva, Stocken, Ashwell, Onley, Swinfin Hall, Lincoln (also others on a more irregular basis)⁸

Staff interviewed – community chaplain, project manager, and volunteer coordinator (3)

Low Newton Open Gate⁹ – located in prison accommodation (terraced property) outside the gate and is the only community chaplaincy dedicated to women in the only women's prison in the North East of England.

Project commencement – October 2005 (started work with women in 2006)

Number of referrals since 2006 - 233

Number mentored since project began – 188 (and others unable to support)

Number being mentored December 2010 – 41 (13 in Low Newton, 26 released into the community, and 2 at Askham Grange)

Number of volunteers December 2010 - 15

Sources of funding – Tudor Trust, John Paul Getty Trust, Porticus Trust, four Local Authorities, and some small individual donations (previous funding from Lloyds TSB, and Northern Rock Foundation)

Prisons – Low Newton, Askham Grange letter contacts with women prisoners

Staff interviewed – community chaplain, project manager, project worker (3)

⁸ This means that the Leicester community chaplaincy receive referrals from a number of prisons, in addition to Leicester which is a local prison with an operational capacity of 392.

⁹ Low Newton accommodated male and female young persons and adult women until September 1998. It is currently an all female prison and serves the courts in a catchment area from the Scottish Borders to North Yorkshire and North Cumbria. The operational capacity is 336.

Manchester¹⁰ – located in the Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street.

Project commencement - 2004

Number of referrals since 2004 - 420

Number mentored since project began - 150

Number being mentored December 2010 - 21

Number of volunteers December 2010 - 38

Sources of funding – Prison Fellowship, Cafe income, Personal donations (and funding a major concern when I visited)

Prisons – Manchester, Styal, Buckley Hall, Forest Bank, Wymott, Risley, and Swinfin Hall Staff interviewed – community chaplain and project manager, IAG (Information, Guidance and Advice worker, IT tutor (3)

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WCCYP) Leeds¹¹ – located in prison service offices outside the gate, next to the Visitor Centre (Armley).

Project commencement – 2005

Number of referrals – 1126 from March 2006 to February 2011

Number mentored since beginning – could not be sourced accurately

Number mentored between July 2009 and December 2010 – 115 *light touch* and 136 *significant support*

Number of volunteers February 2011 – 22 active

Sources of funding – Previous NOMS funding (ends March 2011), Lloyds TSB (ends October 2011), Lottery over three years (ends July 2012), Investor Save money (at February 2011 12 months funding remaining)

Prisons – Leeds, Wealstun, and Lindholme

Staff interviewed – Director, community chaplain, resettlement worker, ETE, and volunteer coordinator (5)

¹⁰ Manchester community chaplaincy is similar to Leicester, to a lesser degree West Yorkshire, in that it receives referrals from several prisons including Manchester (formerly Strangeways) which has an operational capacity of 1269.

¹¹ Also known as Armley with an operational capacity of 1004.

Feltham HMYOI New beginnings for young lives¹² – located in prison service offices outside the gate but on prison property, and shared with prison administrative staff.

Project commencement – 2005

Number of referrals since 2005 – 123

Number mentored since project began – 93

Number being mentored March 2011 – 44

Number of volunteers – 121 (located in all London Boroughs but not all active)

Sources of funding – Lloyds TSB, Lankelly Chase, Church Urban Fund, Wates Foundation, Jerusalem Trust, Porticus Trust, City Bridge Trust, and one-off donation from London Probation

Prisons – Feltham, Rochester, and Isis (Belmarsh)

Staff interviewed – Christian and Muslim community chaplains, project coordinator (3)

Swansea¹³ – shared office with Swansea Prison Chaplaincy located inside the prison.

Project commencement – 2001 and the first in England and Wales

Number of referrals since 2001 – 3143

Number of beneficiaries - 916

Number being mentored April 2011 – 35 (5 pre-release and 30 post-release for a specified period of 18 weeks, not unlimited engagement)

Number of volunteers – different policy operates at Swansea

Sources of funding – Coastal Project is a Regional Strategic Project covering Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion

Prisons – Swansea

Staff interviewed - four community chaplains and the Project Lead in Administration and Learning (5)

¹² Originally built as an Industrial School in 1854 before becoming a Borstal in 1910. The current Young Offender Institution is an amalgam of Ashford Remand Centre and Feltham Borstal in 1990-1991. It receives young offenders from the ages of 15-21 and the operational capacity is 762.

¹³ Swansea Prison has existed since 1861. It is a local prison that holds prisoners up to and including Category B and its operational capacity is 422.

D] RESEARCH FINDINGS

Di] The rationale of community chaplaincy

These data reveal a consistently clear rationale of how community chaplains understand their role within the criminal justice system. (Inter.1) It is a 'personal one-to-one approach for the individual'. Someone is 'there who cares for the individual and wants to support them. We are not there to control them; we are not there to restrain them; we are there to encourage them and to bring them something that statutory organisations cannot'. Additionally community chaplaincy brings hope through forming 'supportive relationships'. Accordingly when analysing responses from community chaplains represented in this study, their vocabulary is replete with providing a *personal service* to the *individual*; the provision of *care* and *support*; a *supportive presence*; and *relationships* that are unconditional. Arguably this *theology of personalism and mutuality* (Williams 2010: 25) differentiates community chaplaincy from, for example, the probation service whose organisational contours were once defined by advice, assistance, and friendship (Whitehead 2010) but no longer.

It is of interest to allude to the distinctive way in which the Manchester project operationalises the concept of 'layered support' towards ex-prisoners which incorporates the faith-based intervention of community chaplains; the support of IAG - Information, Advice and Guidance; cafe facilities at Methodist Central Hall which is staffed by volunteers; and volunteer mentors. The juxtaposition of personal support through relationships with individual offenders marks the work of community chaplaincy. (Inter.10) 'Community chaplaincy makes a distinctive contribution in that what we try to do is to build a relationship' with the ex-prisoner.

Another respondent commented: (Inter.13) 'The distinctive contribution of the voluntary sector is that we approach the work in a person-centred way. We can be more flexible in the way we work with people. We are not so constrained by external targets and government directives as the public and private sector would be, or certainly the public sector. That is the voluntary sector generally. In terms of community chaplaincy there is the added element of faith so that a number of people who work in community chaplaincy see it as a practical application of their faith. So that is an extra added bonus'. It should be clarified that community chaplaincy is not averse to operational aims, objectives, and targets, to give focus and meet funding requirements. However it is 'more qualitative than quantitative. Probation is an interesting case because it came from a faith background and their original ideas are similar to what we are talking about in community chaplaincy, which is interesting. But now they have turned into a great monster, a machine that churns people through. They see themselves very much about protecting the public, public safety and security. We don't see that as our role; we see our role as supporting the individual primarily'.

Nevertheless community chaplaincy is not unrealistic of the difficulties inherent within their work with ex-prisoners: (Inter.3) 'They could be the most nasty people you could come across but, fundamentally, they are made in the image of God. I might not like them or what they've done, but I've learned that the substance of humanity is right in front of me and I have a responsibility'.

These responses begin to illustrate the distinctive essence of community chaplaincy, which can be expanded by referring to the notion of added value.

Dii] Added Value

According to Robert Shaw (2010) the added value of community chaplaincy consists in the following elements: faith-based and not funded by the state which bestows a degree of independence from government; it utilises volunteers and involves work with offender's families located within communities; and it offers hope and stability through relationships. When exploring the work of community chaplaincy through the lens of *added value*, these data reveal a discrete terminology of hope, love, and compassion; person centred; the work of volunteers who give their time without payment primarily because they care about the individuals they work with. This is explained by one respondent (Inter.2) that added value means offenders 'are valued as people' because of the interpersonal dynamic that underpins community chaplaincy. Moreover there is 'no judgement and they don't have to meet targets with us, but we work with them with the targets they'd like to achieve and it is a very personal and human touch'.

Arguably the personal-human dynamic has been eroded within the criminal justice system over recent decades, particularly since 1997 under the modernising campaigns of New Labour. Barbara Hudson argued that by turning from a *person in situation* perspective to a greater concentration upon deeds (emphasising *what* you've done rather than exploring and understanding *why*), has impoverished by dehumanising the criminal justice domain. In fact she suggests that this "loss of interest in people in both theoretical and policy domains is surprising as well as disturbing" (1993: 62-63. See also: Whitehead, 2010; Williams and Elliott, 2010). By contrast community chaplaincy provides evidence that this orientation towards the *offender as person* still has a foothold: (Inter.3) 'The added value is the longevity of the relationship we have with the men and women, and even if they continue to go in and out of prison we believe the incremental step of change is not lost and so people's lives begin to shape in a different way'.

Other responses heard during interview were: (Inter.4) Getting alongside someone, faith-based companionship, pastoral concern for the whole person which includes practical, social, and spiritual dimensions (which echoes Ottawa data). 'The breadth of the work and the approach we take incorporates and puts a value on the pastoral and spiritual work we do.'

(Inter.10) Added value 'goes beyond best service. There is a quality to the relationship. Our client group is notoriously unpredictable' but community chaplaincy is there for them and this adds to what is being done. This is not a 9 to 5 job but a vocation which is inspired by faith and a person-centred set of values. Moreover (Inter. 9) there is a 'commitment to and understanding that we will be there to help; community chaplaincy is a vocation and not a job'.

(Inter.13) Community chaplaincy was described as operating within a gentler culture that is more accepting and less judgmental of colleagues and service users. Accordingly the 'added value is the practical application of faith, which gives the work

an extra edge and makes it possible to work with the more difficult and chaotic people’.

Diii] Clarifying and realising the vision

Earlier it was clarified that the vision of community chaplaincy in England and Wales is to help ex-prisoners to achieve successful re-entry by offering support and services to free themselves from crime and build a brighter future in the community. When reflecting upon the vision one respondent commented: (Inter.2) ‘Everybody needs somebody to walk with them and my personal faith is about the journey and being with someone on a journey. This is the Christian journey that Christ walks with us and encourages us to walk with each other and those at the margins of life. So that it what drives me, I think’.

However (Inter.5) the Feltham project is under no illusion of how difficult it is to realise the vision because ‘Drugs and alcohol have played their part in their offending. These are lads who predominantly have had insufficient love and parental boundaries because they come from large families who live in a 3-bed flat in London. Dad is not around and mum is at work all day. Therefore they are left to their own devices from a young age and have not had positive role models. Consequently they are involved in gangs, guns and knives. They want fast money and the drug culture can provide that, and generating fear and being promiscuous generates respect and ways of achieving credibility with peers’.

One community chaplain provided unsolicited personal testimony of how the vision underpinning community chaplaincy had affected his life. (Inter.8) ‘Because I on a personal level have experienced what many offenders are going through, having been in prison, having been homeless and a heroin addict, and having gone through that personal transformation in relation to my faith then I know that faith works. For me it is the foundation of why I do this work. And so because I believe in the faith element and have experienced it, I can draw upon that in my ministry to those I am supporting’

PW: But what do you mean by *faith works*?

This was expressed as a belief that faith had produced a transformational impact within his life. Therefore ‘if it worked for me then maybe it would work for ex-prisoners as well’. Additionally (Inter.3) ‘I have seen men’s lives transformed by the gospel. We have not badgered them but they have hung around long enough’ for this to occur. Furthermore some reach a certain age and say enough is enough (McNeill and Weaver 2010).

Div] Big Society and Rehabilitation Revolution

For three successive New Labour administrations between 1997 and 2010, the spirit of the age was defined by the theme of *modernisation*. Subsequently since May 2010 when an alliance of Conservatives and Liberals unexpectedly joined forces, the new spirit of the age could well be defined by the *Big Society*. Arguably the Big Society constitutes the central theme around which a narrative thread will be constructed to shape the direction of political travel, clarify priorities, and define policies, one of which is the *rehabilitation revolution*. In fact the splicing together of the Big Society

with the rehabilitation revolution has profound implications for the operational functioning of the criminal justice system during the next few years.

Prior to the general election of May 2010 the Conservative Party had already spoken of the Big Society and it remains problematic to specify its precise contours within the 'real' world of individuals, families, and local communities in different regions of England and Wales. Nevertheless it is driven by a clear image of a re-formed state and public sector that will reduce expenditure. Essentially the Big Society constitutes the devolution of power and responsibility from central government to citizens in local communities, who will be expected to address their own issues and resolve their own problems. It is stated that government cannot be expected to solve every problem, meet every human need, and so small is beautiful in the way citizens themselves must accept responsibility for their own destinies. This resonates with the 19th century Victorian laissez-faire state as well as the neoliberal state which emerged in the 1970s (Bell 2011; Harvey 2005, 2010), more than the immediate post-war interventionist and inclusivist Keynesian welfare state. Redirecting accountability outwards from a central hub towards all things local is an economic imperative because the Big Society is a tangible response to considerable reductions in state spending, the details of which were announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review of October 2010.

The Big Society has implications for the criminal justice system. Its manifestation through the rehabilitation revolution will build upon but also extend the ideology of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) which, since 2003, has extolled the virtues of competition between the public, private, and the voluntary sectors to provide offender services. Additionally the Conservative Party in a Policy Green Paper published before the election of 2010 was keen to unlock the expertise of citizens in the voluntary sector to facilitate the goal of offender rehabilitation. It was made clear that:

At present, many charities are keen to expand their services, but they do not have access to the resources, while NOMS commissioning arrangements shut them out. We want to end the stifling influence of central and regional bureaucracies, and create new opportunities for third sector groups to enter the field of offender management (2008: 49)

Accordingly the drift of policy has been in the direction of encouraging and creating opportunities for the voluntary sector within the criminal justice domain. Importantly this has implications for faith communities in general and community chaplaincy specifically.

Even though one of the community chaplains stated that she may not have an accurate understanding, she continued (Inter.3) 'If I'm really honest I am incredibly frustrated with the concept of the Big Society. I am frustrated and disappointed that firstly there has been a lack of recognition of the voluntary agencies, the third sector, including the faith sector that have given thousands of hours to the rehabilitation of offenders and never been recognised for it. I am disappointed because we have a piece of work here that we have statistical analysis on a board in front of me that says 20 people this year have not gone back to prison. They have got jobs and we are not funded for that and now the Big Society wants us to do all that for free and our

funding has been cut and there has been a devaluation of the third sector because of it'.

(Inter.6) 'We have, since 2005, been part of the Big Society before David Cameron talked about it. This is because of the way in which community chaplaincy depends on its volunteers. Volunteers give of their own time and resources without being paid, and this makes an impression on the young offenders at Feltham'.

(Inter. 9) 'I do not fully understand the Big Society' and I have major questions concerning: a) disrespect of the work already being done; b) because government is involved some are wary; c) it's a cosmetic development; and d) cutting money to charities, and money is an issue in providing services 'so I am sceptical and cynical, I'm afraid'.

Within the framework of the Big Society, and the rehabilitation revolution, can community chaplaincy contribute to reducing recidivism? If so, how can this objective be achieved? (Inter.13) 'I think it's about the relationship between the service user and the link worker or the key worker. That is a special relationship that makes people feel they are accepted and that somebody believes in them and somebody is there to do stuff for them and it is over and above the call of duty. They get frustrated with their probation officer if they are on probation licence. A lot of the people we see are not on probation and are non-statutory. But the ones on probation I feel, I think, some of the probation officers are very good, but others have a case load that is too big and have not got the capacity to deliver what these people need. We do have the capacity because we have the volunteer support and volunteers by their very nature have time and can go the extra mile'.

Dv] Prevailing issues and profile of prisoners

Community chaplains drew attention to a readily identifiable set of problems facing prisoners when leaving custody, many to face chaotic and uncertain futures, thus compounding the situation prior to incarceration. The usual suspects are accommodation, drugs and alcohol, mental health concerns, family relationships, and finances. One respondent stated that prisoners leaving Swansea Prison may receive a discharge grant but if they proceed to make a claim for benefit this could take as long as 2/3 weeks (a conservative estimate) to process by the 'system'. (Inter.8) 'So I have known offenders to steal in order to live. The system does not work to benefit the ex-prisoners, then community chaplaincy steps in with food, help, and support'. Furthermore if someone leaves prison with accommodation issues then the emergency housing stock is not good and BB accommodation below standard. Consequently he 'may have a roof over his head but the conditions are a breeding ground for crime and he's not escaping from what he's trying to escape from'.

It is instructive to draw attention to the insights provided by the community chaplain at Low Newton, the dedicated women's prison near Durham in the North East of England. In addition to references to accommodation, drugs and alcohol, the use of time, constructive activities and interests were mentioned; money and specifically obtaining benefits in a timely manner after release; and family issues involving relationships with children after serving a custodial sentence.

The Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle* (Ministry of Justice, 2010: 7) constructs a profile of the offending population. It is asserted that crime is committed by people with multiple problems including drugs, alcohol, accommodation, mental illness, no educational qualifications and poor employment records, in addition to which 24% were placed in local authority care as a child. However the Green Paper clarifies that women have a significantly different profile to male offenders because they are convicted for less serious offences - theft and handling constitute 44% of their offences compared to 28% male. This is a profile of more complex problems because of mental health problems, emotions, drugs and alcohol, experience of domestic violence and sexual abuse (see All Parliamentary Group (2010) Corston Review; Clarke (2010). Additionally the Prison Reform Trust (2011) has reinforced that there were 1800 women in custody in 1996, currently over 4000, which masks deleterious impacts upon children.

Another community chaplain (Inter.4) clarified that she works with a mixed bag of people. However there are 'few who do not fit the 20 to 30 something, white male, impoverished background, possibly in care when they were younger. If they don't fit with that group when they come out then it is unusual'. Consequently, community chaplaincy endeavours to contribute to the NOMS Pathways to facilitate reducing reoffending and community safety. These pathways are accommodation; employment, training, and education; drugs and alcohol; mental and physical health; children and families (specifically pertinent at Low Newton); attitudes, thinking, and behaviour; finances and benefits; prolific and other priority offenders; the voluntary and community sector; and Together Women Programme.

These data reveal that community chaplaincy is involved with ex-prisoners who have been sentenced to prison for different periods of time, so that some will be released on licence to probation and others not. When exploring this point with respondents one commented that she works with a breadth of people (Inter.3) 'and we said at the beginning that we would work with anybody. We said that to probation and the police and this was a scary thing for them to hear. What's happened over the last 6/7 years is that we have a proven track record that we can work with the whole breadth of the criminal justice system. Our volunteers have skills to deal with that'.

Furthermore one of the few Muslim community chaplains recounted when reflecting upon the young offenders leaving Feltham to return to London Boroughs that they will be confronted with drug, alcohol, peer pressures, accommodation issues and family problems. Moreover there are problems of a different kind facing returning Muslim young people. In other words offending amongst the Muslim community conveys stigma, it marks the young person and the community has problems facing up to their behaviour and its consequences. Even though some communities will accept the youth, others find it more difficult. Some would rather say that (Inter.6) 'he has gone on holiday to Pakistan' than admit openly that he is serving or has served a sentence at Feltham YOI.

Dvi] Volunteers

Volunteers are critical for the operational functioning in most community chaplaincies. Even though community chaplaincy is a faith-based organisation embedded within the voluntary sector, this does not mean that all volunteers express faith or belong to

communities of faith. They may not be associated with Churches or Mosques, but it is nevertheless important (Inter.1) 'they understand our faith ethos.' Community chaplaincy projects consist of a core of paid staff but 'Volunteers do the majority of our mentoring (at Leicester) so they work with individuals that are deemed appropriate. So we go through a prisoner assessment and if they fit the criteria then they can work with a volunteer one-to-one and the core work happens in this office. Getting a volunteer at the level of being able to mentor which does take time - risk assessments, needs assessments, training; when we've done all those things we can take the volunteers into prison and they can start working with prisoners in prison.' Ideally volunteers are matched with prisoners prior to release so that the process of building relationships begins and subsequently continued beyond the gate. 'When they're in prison most (volunteer contacts) are on special visits or legal visits, sometimes in Chaplaincy, and in the community MacDonald's is brilliant.'

It was clarified by a Volunteer Coordinator (Inter.11) that volunteers are trained and must negotiate a post-training interview before going into prison to begin their work. Volunteer mentoring is time-limited to prevent dependency and it 'would generally be practical support from attending appointments to help to fill in appropriate forms, to looking for a job, emotional support where it was relevant and also spiritual support when relevant.' Again it was confirmed that not all volunteers belong to faith communities 'but we have had Quakers and Sikhs.' Volunteers meet with ex-prisoners in the community weekly, but levels of contact depend upon volunteer availability and the level of support required by the ex-prisoners.

(Inter.2) Volunteers, ideally, are linked-up with a woman in prison at Low Newton during prison visits as early as possible to establish a working relationship. The process of matching reflects the experience of the volunteer and needs of the woman offender, and sometimes the process works better than others. Nevertheless the 'more contact prior to release to establish a relationship' the better post-release. Again it was pointed out that it is not a prerequisite for volunteers to be people of faith, but 'faith community volunteers sit and think about what they are doing a bit longer'. At the Low Newton community chaplaincy project approximately 50% of its volunteers (7) are people of faith, and a Project Worker clarified that volunteers can work with a woman for up to 2 years.

(Inter.14) Another Volunteer Coordinator stated that volunteers are intrinsic to the operational functioning of community chaplaincy at Leeds and 'without them we would not be able to provide a service to service users' (adult men leaving prison). Leeds community chaplaincy comprises six members of staff (Director, community chaplain, resettlement worker, ETE, volunteer coordinator, and administration office manager) in addition to 22 active volunteers 'who support the work of the resettlement key workers'. Additionally 'We try to match a service user with 2 link workers. We ask for 3 hours per week from the volunteer and it may be that the volunteer can only offer a Thursday morning, but the service user has lots of appointments on a Tuesday. So we try to match them up and reduce pressure on the volunteer.' Once again it was confirmed that not all volunteers are from faith backgrounds 'and not sure what our percentage would be from a faith background'. However 'I think we talk about them having an awareness and understanding of and commitment to our multi-faith ethos; this is something we emphasise'. Furthermore

Leeds does little to promote the use of volunteers because of beneficial links with the Volunteer Centre from whom they recruit. In fact there is not a rapid turnover of volunteers and a stable situation prevails 'and our longest serving volunteer has been here for five years'. I was dutifully provided with a Volunteer Link Worker Manual which contains helpful information for volunteers.

Even though Feltham confirmed that they could not function without volunteers, there was a greater emphasis upon recruiting from faith communities from within London Boroughs, the implication being that people of faith from within diverse faith communities are drawn to the work of community chaplaincy. Matching consists of a Christian volunteer with Christian youth; a Muslim volunteer with Muslim youth.

By contrast the situation at Swansea is different compared to the other five locations. (Inter.8) If Leicester, Leeds, Manchester, Low Newton, and Feltham rely upon volunteers, a greater emphasis is placed on partnerships within the community at Swansea. Community chaplaincy is also organised differently 'because you've got to be careful when using volunteers. If the volunteer is not aware of the individual's offending, personality, it could go seriously wrong. So we are picky and choosy who we bring in as volunteers. We do lean upon volunteers from time to time, when relevant and appropriate, but we are very choosy because of our protectiveness towards the individual'. Accordingly most of the work at Swansea is undertaken by community chaplains and volunteers are used more selectively.

Working with volunteers can present its own distinctive issues which were illustrated during interviews: the possibility of mixed agendas; limitations of time and availability which clashes with the needs of ex-prisoners; differential levels of commitment, knowledge, and experience of the criminal justice system; maintaining and motivating 'good' volunteers; unrealistic expectations when working with chaotic and unpredictable service users who do not always keep planned appointments¹⁴. One respondent posed the question: (Inter.14) 'Are they doing it to resolve something in themselves, or are they doing it just to get a job? So we put things in place to ask for a minimum commitment' (of 18 months). Finally (Inter.3) 'Our work is really simple. We recruit and train volunteers and they are from very diverse communities from across Greater Manchester'.

It is worth reflecting upon whether volunteers of faith than none are more effective at working with ex-prisoners (O'Connor and Bogue 2010); and Circles of Support and Accountability have wrestled with volunteers drawn from faith communities (Richards 2010).

Dvii) Funding (and payment by results)

The 'business' component of community chaplaincy is an essential requirement to enable the 'pastoral' component to function. Funding is not provided by central government to any project: (Inter.1) 'I don't know of any that gets essential funding from central funding... Our funding is mainly charitable foundations – Lloyds TSB, Tudor Trust - organisations like that, but their resources are running dry'. Nearly all the projects visited expressed concerns about funding arrangements going forward and, as

¹⁴ It is instructive to refer to the following resource: Clinks (2010) *Managing Volunteers: A volunteering and mentoring guide*, York: Clinks.

more community chaplaincies evolve, there is greater competition for the same limited pot of charitable resources. Funds to cover remunerated staff and the expenses of volunteers are essential, so community chaplaincy requires a minimal level of funding to function. 'Another thing we have to look towards is payment by results, and I don't know how it will work or if it could work with community chaplaincy. It could work but we would lose what we are about'¹⁵.

(Inter.17) One Project Manager made it clear that there are ongoing funding issues and the current three year funding was coming to an end when I visited in December 2010. Additionally 'As community chaplaincy grows and new volunteers join, then costs expand which puts financial pressure on community chaplaincy'. In fact there is always pressure because of the time-limited nature of funding within the charitable-voluntary sector.

(Inter.3) Initially funding at Manchester was provided by Greater Manchester Churches Together and the Catholic Church for a period of 3 years. Currently the situation is precarious and would be more difficult if the project had to pay for facilities and operating costs. These are met by the Methodist Central Hall, the building within which community chaplaincy is located and which is 'a massive gift to us'. However 'every two months we get to the point when no money is coming in and I won't get paid. However there is money reserved for volunteer expenses for the next 6-8 months and this is really important. The community chaplaincy will run whether I'm paid or not'.

Some projects appear to be in better financial shape than others, but all are subject to the vagaries of time-limited charitable funding. If accommodation at Manchester is provided by the Methodist Central Hall, the Leeds' project is located in offices provided by the Prison Service next to the Visitor Centre. Accordingly it does not pay for accommodation, heating, and lighting. Nevertheless funding is required for six staff and expenses for 30 volunteers, but they were relatively 'happy' with their financial position in February 2011. Leeds benefited from an injection of resources at the beginning of the project and was (Inter.13) 'Recently involved in successful fund raising and got some money from the John Paul Getty Trust which gives us 3 years' funding. We have an application to the Henry Smith charity and we'll know about this in April (2011). If we get that we'll break even this financial year and into next year I'll still be looking. We have reasonable reserves and so the next financial year is fine'

(Inter.15) Funding is an ongoing concern at Feltham. Like other community chaplaincies it is funded from numerous sources, and in 2005 received start-up funds from the Big Lottery fund for the first three years of the project. It is interesting to

¹⁵ A document of interest is: Clinks (2010) *Payment by Results: What does it mean for voluntary organisations working with offenders?* York: Clinks. Payment by Results offers a financial reward to the voluntary sector for success at, for example, reducing recidivism. Essentially (see the Peterborough Pilot Project) up-front funding is provided to a service provider by social impact investors who will get a return on their investment if there is a positive outcome. So the risk is borne by the investor and not the service provider. "The Peterborough Prison pilot is being administered by Social Finance and will involve St. Giles Trust and other social (voluntary) sector organisations in delivery. The programme will provide support for 3,000 short-term prisoners over six years. If rates of reoffending drop by at least 7.5%, the bond investors will receive a return on their investment based on the savings made" (p4). Therefore there is a source of non-governmental finance. Also see Disley et al. (May2011) on the *Social Impact Bond* at HMP Peterborough.

observe that, currently, its sources of funding are Lloyds TSB, Lankelly Chase Foundation, Church Urban Fund, Wates Foundation, Jerusalem Trust, Porticus Trust, City Bridge Trust (and previously received a one-off contribution from the London Probation Service).

Finally (Inter.7) Swansea is funded via the European Union as part of the Coastal Regeneration Programme. In 2001 the project began with no money before receiving a grant from the Community Safety Partnership. Swansea community chaplaincy is currently funded until December 2013. However, funding arrangements are not ideal (Inter.9) due to the uncertain nature of projects having to rely on charities. Practical issues emerge when, on occasions, members of staff do not receive expenses in a timely manner.

Dviii] Data Summary

The aim of this research was to establish an exploratory understanding of community chaplaincy and the space it currently occupies in the criminal justice system of England and Wales at the end of its first decade (2001-2011). This exploration was pursued through visiting six community chaplaincy project locations where 22 interviews were conducted over six months (November 2010-April 2011) on what is arguably a significant yet relatively under-researched phenomenon. These data reveal a person-centred, theologically-informed, value-driven, and voluntary-charitable organisation which operates within a multi-faith ethos. It offers supportive relationship to men, women, and young people (Feltham) at the point they leave custodial institutions (**Di**). Some who leave custody are the subject of licence conditions which stipulate regular contact with probation; others are not subjected to statutory requirements. Even though projects are distinguishable from other organisational domains by their faith ethos, this does not mean that all volunteers are people of faith (**Dvi** which is a difference with Canada). Nevertheless community chaplaincy requires that volunteers are aware of its faith ethos. Importantly community chaplaincy does not attempt to proselytise offenders; rather supportive relationships are offered unconditionally to people of faith and none.

Community chaplaincy, because of its faith orientation and value-drive nature, is more vocation than job which facilitates added value (**Di**). It also offers hope to people who, as a consequence of their offending, have acquired the negative status of labelled offender, prisoner, or even ex-prisoner. It operates with a person-in-situation mentality to counter-balance those de-humanising and depersonalising tendencies which have colonised criminal justice over recent years (Hudson 1993; Whitehead 2010). Its vision (**Di**) is to walk with the marginalised and excluded on a difficult journey because of accumulated problems compounded since unpropitious childhood experiences: family conflict, insecurity, vulnerability, impoverished education, unstable work record, substance abuse, financial problems, and sub-standard accommodation. To people immured in such adverse social circumstances community chaplaincy is a conduit of hope and support as they return to the community (**Dv**). Arguably within the rehabilitation revolution, community chaplaincy has exemplified the Big Society for a decade (**Div**), but concerns were expressed about what these concepts mean during 2010-15. The voluntary sector in general, and faith sector in particular, may well receive encouragement to get more involved in the criminal

justice system by central government, but adequate resources are required and funding is a pressing issue for community chaplaincy projects (**Dvii**). The work of community chaplaincy is not and can never be resource neutral.

E] THEORETICAL EXPLORATION and the CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

When constructing meaning around these data, or at least some of these data, the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) offers rich theoretical possibilities to reflect upon. Within his methodology of social science which incorporates *verstehen* (human understanding) and ideal types, we encounter the notion of social action. In other words human beings constantly make decisions about the what, how, and why of social action (why do we behave as we do?), and ascribe meanings to their own and others' behaviour. Accordingly Weber presents a typology of social action in *Economy and Society* which can be elucidated as follows.

- *Traditional* – behaviour undertaken automatically, habitually, without thinking (human beings on automatic pilot).
- *Affectual* – emotionally driven forms of behaviour.
- *Value rational (Wertrational)* when human action is orientated around a specific value. In *Economy and Society* Weber states that human actors seek to “put into practice their convictions of what seems to them to be required by duty, honour, the pursuit of beauty, a religious call, personal loyalty or the importance of some cause no matter in what it consists, regardless of possible cost to themselves” (1922/1968: 25). This dimension resonates with the rationality of the ten community chaplains because they engage with ex-prisoners because it is inherently right as an end-in-itself.
- *Instrumentally rational (Zweckrational)* is where the means and ends of human action are rationally calculated and carefully weighed. If *rationalisation* is the Weberian process by which society, and individuals within it, are increasingly orientated to planning, calculation, technical procedures and efficiency; *rationality* is the degree to which these features dominate social action more than, for example, religious values. The main difference between *value rational* and *instrumental rationality* is that the former is social action pursued as an end-in-itself; the latter as a mean-to-an-end.

It may be argued that the contemporary criminal justice system in England and Wales constitutes a clash of rationalities. On one hand community chaplaincy resonates with the Weberian notion of *value rational*. On the other the modern world which has evolved since the 18th century Enlightenment; the capitalist and neoliberal world; but also the criminal justice system since the 1980s; bear the marks of *instrumental rationality*. The former supports ex-prisoners unconditionally, as an end-in-itself, a value-driven and sacred duty, and is quite simply the right thing to do when action is motivated by faith. The latter operates a means-to-an-end rationality and searches for the most efficient means to achieve, for example, government objectives and targets, which has implications when working with people who offend.

Criminal justice organisations (including probation) work with offenders to achieve a specific *outcome*, primarily to reduce reoffending or else there will be instrumental consequences (financial penalties). Community chaplaincy is preoccupied with providing supportive relationships (*output*), which is a meaningful, faith-based, and value-driven end-in-itself response to people with complex needs and problems. Accordingly, and to state the matter succinctly: *community chaplaincy is indubitably in*

the criminal justice system but most certainly not of it. There are differences of *degree* and also *kind* between community chaplaincy projects and other organisational domains, neatly captured by one of the respondents whose comments bear repetition:

It gets down to what is your drive, what is your motivation. If I was in this to make money, for an easy ride, I would have been out of it nine and a half years ago. You are in it because there is a conviction as a person of faith to what you are doing is what you are requested, led, to do.

What, therefore, is the distinctive contribution of community chaplaincy projects to contemporary criminal justice?

F] CONTRIBUTION of COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY to the CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

It may be suggested there are three interrelated areas for consideration and development when reflecting on the future of community chaplaincy, which can be outlined as follows.

Fi] Provide unconditional support for ex-prisoners – a question of values

Criminal justice systems are comprised of complex and contested features, one of which is an *instrumental* mode of thought. This means that governments expect their criminal justice organisations such as prison and probation systems to be effective at achieving a specific goal, namely rehabilitative transformation and social control as efficiently as possible. Even though voluntary sector organisations and faith communities cannot avoid being affected by this instrumental rationality, particularly when the rehabilitative revolution is advocating payment by results, it does not define the essence of community chaplaincy. Therefore I offer for reflection and critical debate the position that the Community Chaplaincy Association should continue to fashion a distinctive place for itself during the process of criminal justice re-formation which is currently unfolding during 2010-2015. Specifically it can train and mobilise volunteers to work as mentors, encourage the capacity for good will within churches and other faith traditions, and build supportive relationships that express care and concern towards ex-prisoners as they leave custodial institutions. Arguably this is the terrain best suited to community chaplaincy which would then leave numerous public, private, and other voluntary sector organisations to provide a range of services and programmes that address, for example, employment, accommodation, and substance abuse consistent with the desistance literature (McNeill, Raynor and Trotter 2010; McNeill and Weaver 2010).

However the substantive point for emphasis, supported by this research, is that empathy, understanding, building supportive relationships, and setting a good behavioural example to ex-prisoners are not solely undertaken as a means-to-an-end, but rather end-in-itself. Accordingly there is a *moral* as well as *instrumental* demand upon community chaplaincy to provide unconditional support regardless of the impact upon recidivism. The dominant story line of reducing crime is as understandable as it is desirable, but the distinctive contribution of community chaplaincy to the rehabilitation revolution operates within a moral framework that reaches beyond narrow instrumentalism of political discourse. It is this perspective which differentiates faith-orientated contributions from that of other organisational domains in an increasingly market orientated field of criminal justice providers. Community chaplaincy is enjoined to serve others, to translate faith into practical action, and to do this unconditionally in its work with ex-prisoners regardless of who they are, what they have done, and what the outcome might be. This resonates with Weber's concept of *value rational* social action. Additionally, this perspective is informed by the notion of shared well-being and mutuality which has been expressed theologically and worth repeating:

No element in the Body is dispensable or superfluous: what affects one affects all, for good and ill, since both suffering and flourishing belong to the entire organism not to any individual or purely local grouping (Williams 2010: 25)

This does not mean, nor is it being suggested, that community chaplaincy does not contribute to the instrumental goal of reducing reoffending. Consequently this is the second substantive point for discussion.

Fii] Reduce reoffending through supportive relationships

The desistance paradigm within the correctional literature emphasises that it's a process rather than a one-off salvific event which addresses individual and social factors, facilitated by family, friends, and engagement of professionals. Importantly *supportive relationships* are a critical element of this process which has recently been¹⁶ articulated as follows: "Increasingly, then, the desistance paradigm understands rehabilitation as a relational process but achieved in the context of relationships with others" (Maruna and LeBel 2010: 81).

The literature on the salience of relationships within the therapeutic, rehabilitative, and desistance process is significantly long-standing: Carl Rogers (1961); Traux and Carkhuff (1967); Ian Sinclair (1971); Martin Davies (1985) on the quality of social work relationships; Chris Trotter (2006); Joyce Lishman (1994); Andrew Underdown (1998); Sue Rex (2001); Peter Raynor (2002); Fergus McNeill (2003); David Smith (2006); McNeill, Raynor and Trotter (2010); McNeill and Weaver (2010).

Some of the key elements distilled from this literature draw attention to: relationships characterised by genuineness, warmth, approval, acceptance, encouragement, empathy, sensitivity, and facilitating hope. When reflecting on the process of casework in probation history, Raynor states that it was a process "of therapeutic work in which the offender's needs and motivation, characteristically hidden by presenting problems, could be revealed through a process of insight facilitated by a relationship with a probation officer" (2002: 1173). Additionally desistance is facilitated by relationships based on trust; the quality of the worker and ability to form relationships can be more important in shaping outcomes than the methods employed in supervision (Smith 2006); pro-social modelling delivered through quality relationships is a principle of What Works and effective practice (Underdown 1998). Recently it has been affirmed that "Evidence indicates that the relationship between an offender and the person managing them is an important factor in successful rehabilitation" (Green Paper 2010: 24). Accordingly community

¹⁶ **Summary of the desistance literature**

According to McNeill and Weaver (2010) empirical research has established the following principles: desistance is an individual process because each person is different; motivating people and facilitating hope are crucial elements; desistance can only be pursued within the context of human relationships; support and develop the strengths and resources that can be found within offenders and ex-prisoners; respect human agency and self-determination which means working with and alongside offenders; blend personal capital (individual skills, knowledge, and resources) with social capital (the development of relationships, networks of support, family and community links). This is as relevant for probation work as community chaplaincy projects.

Furthermore there is a discussion on *Religion, Spirituality and Desistance* at page 68 which is pertinent for community chaplaincy and informed by Giordano et al. (2007), Marranci (2009); Maruna et al. (2006).

chaplainship is well placed to make a positive contribution to the desistance paradigm through supportive relationships within the context of mutuality and ethics of personalism. In fact this may be its major strength and definitive contribution when working with ex-prisoners. However one should not overlook the political context within which community chaplainship engages with ex-prisoners. This is the big picture dimension to which I now turn.

Fiii] Political engagement and social justice

David Harvey locates the vagaries of the human condition within the changing fortunes of a capitalist economic system. The immediate post-war period may well have been shaped by the Keynesian inclusivist and welfare-orientated settlement, but the crisis of the 1970s precipitated a neoliberal resurgence which pervaded the UK, USA, Canada, as well as other countries. There are those who argue that there is no alternative to a capitalist economic system, primarily because it generates the wealth to make the world go round. However its apologists must also observe its differential impacts, illustrated by unequal opportunities, persistent inequality, and social insecurities embedded amongst the most vulnerable sections of the community where one is most likely to locate offenders and ex-prisoners. Furthermore the links between neoliberalism and social dislocations including crime, deviance, and harsh punishments are well documented (Garland 2001; Wacquant 2009; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). Neoliberal ideology also elevates the economic successes of a small minority before social cohesion and security for the many, which is a considerable indictment of its functioning within a competitive, Darwinian survival of the fittest, market place. Nevertheless it should be acknowledged when reflecting on the demands of justice that there is a tradition of biblical, prophetic, and theological engagement with social and economic questions which, in turn, can be extrapolated to critique contemporary material conditions within which ex-prisoners live, move, and have their being. Consequently as the size of the state is reduced, as it withdraws from public places and spaces, and the Big Society expands, the potential impacts of these developments for criminal and social justice must trouble faith communities in general and community chaplainship in particular. Therefore analysis and response can be facilitated by taking account of the following theological perspective.

First there is a prophetic tradition of social protest contained within Old Testament literature. For illustrative purposes it may be recalled that the situation in Northern Israel around 760 to 750 BC was one which precipitated a prophetic response. The relevant illuminative text from this period suggests that Amos was a layman, a casual labourer, not a professional prophet or state representative (Jones 1968: 17). Specifically there were marked contrasts between the nouveau riche and the poor, as well as corruption in the law courts, markets, and elite society. It was to this situation that the prophetic voice spoke the word of social justice to those in a position of leadership. Second, in the 20th century, William Temple (1942) pondered the relationship between Christianity and the nature of the social order. Next, in the 1960s religion played its part in the civil rights movement within the United States, and during the 1970s and 1980s liberation theology engaged with unjust political, social, and economic conditions that pertained in Latin America. Finally, also in the 1980s but this time England and Wales, *Faith in the City* (Archbishop of Canterbury 1985) criticised Thatcherite neoliberal policies and in doing so was allegedly dismissed

by one Cabinet Minister as a Marxist text. It is also claimed that the Prime Minister herself remarked that “There’s nothing about self-help or doing anything for yourself in the report” (Wyatt 1999: 22). There was a growing divide between rich and poor in the 1980s to which *Faith in the City* articulated a critical response, a divide which has grown ever wider since. In fact it has been asserted that:

Thatcherite policies were criticised from the very heart of the Establishment, by the Church of England and by universities. It was shown that she had deliberately pursued a strategy of inequality, creating a society that was scarred by social divisions (Bell 2011: 147)

Faith in the City gave the church a voice in the inner city as it spoke the word of justice on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged through integrating theology, spirituality, and political engagement. It spoke of the common good which resonates with a recent collection of essays on ethics, economics, and justice (Williams and Elliott 2010). Accordingly there is a long-standing tradition of critical engagement of faith and theological reflection with political, social, and economic forces. These are the forces to which all of us are differentially related for good or ill, they generate employment and unemployment, material comforts and poverty, opportunities and inequalities, prospects for some yet relegate others to a marginalised existence where daily experience is one of hopelessness and despair. As much as diverse faith communities and community chaplaincy must offer one-to-one support to ex-prisoners as an end-in-itself, there is also the imperative to engage with the pressing demands of social justice. Any dilution of this dual *individual-support* and *social-justice* responsibility risks religion in general, and the rationale of faith communities and community chaplaincy in particular, being reduced to a narrow ideological apparatus of the state that risks legitimating political, social, and economic arrangements. There is always the danger that simply doing good towards the individual perpetuates criminal and social in-justice because of a failure to take account of the impacts of neoliberalism and the corresponding social circumstances of ex-prisoners before they enter prison and then following their release. Marx reminded us in the 19th century that one should not simply understand the world but transform it, which makes its demands upon people of faith.

G] CONCLUSION

Gi] A corrective to bureaucratic procedures and punitive passions

This research report advances the position that community chaplaincy should continue to make a distinctively significant contribution to the criminal justice system as it enters its second decade. To reiterate the totality of 18 projects with 50 paid staff and 487 volunteers (at March 2011 and which supported 1354 ex-prisoners during 2010) should continue to provide unconditional support to ex-prisoners exiting the state's custodial institutions; contribute to reducing recidivism through the medium of supportive relationships; and develop a strategy for theologically-informed political engagement to promote criminal *and* social justice. By pursuing these three overlapping functions it has the efficacy to restore a semblance of balance to what has become the unbalanced nature of criminal justice practices (Whitehead 2009).

Criminal justice policy, since the early 1990s, has been embarked upon a punitive trajectory in the community and prison (Bell 2011; Whitehead 2010). In fact the process of modernisation, a defining cause célèbre of New Labour from 1997 to 2010, depersonalised the criminal justice domain by surgically removing its value-rational heart and soul. One can readily understand the association between criminal and youth justice with the all-too-human expressive response of vengeance and punishment. However the system's complex ecosystem must be enriched by the corrective human impulses of mutuality (Williams 2010), the offer of supportive relationships, unconditional assistance, the ethic of personalism, and basic human understanding of people who offend. Accordingly this is the discrete domain in which community chaplaincy, as a voluntary-faith sector organisation, can mediate the worst excesses of what has become a dominating neoliberal punitive, bureaucratic, and exclusionary dynamic as the prison population continues to expand¹⁷. Since 2001 it has made a start in this direction but has yet to realise how significant its influence can be as it enters its second decade. Moreover there are a number of developmental issues for the Community Chaplaincy Association and individual projects to consider.

Gii] Developmental issues and some questions

- Is there scope to develop the relationship between prison chaplaincy and community chaplaincy to facilitate desistance outcomes post-release?
- Is there scope to encourage diverse faith communities to provide networks of support for ex-prisoners beyond the gate – offender friendly churches and Mosques as in Ottawa?
- If an ex-prisoner is subject to licence conditions which brings probation and community chaplaincy into contact, should the division of labour between the

¹⁷ It is instructive to locate the notion of *mutuality* within the historical context which has been shaped by neoliberalism. Under the former social democratic politics of Old Labour, mutuality embodied the construction of mutual responsibility for each other, the neighbour. By contrast under neoliberalism, a political and economic philosophy endorsed by Conservatives and New Labour over the previous 20 years, mutuality has been displaced by a culture of egotistical individuality. This constitutes a shift from mutual solidarity and neighbourliness, to a greater preoccupation with the self, the ego, I. This transformation is rigorously analysed in Bell (2011) and Reiner (2007).

statutory agency and project be clarified? How best can these two spheres of influence work together?

- Care must be exercised when engaging with the Rehabilitation Revolution, Big Society, and Payment by Results. If community chaplaincy is drawn closer to the state will this diminish its distinctive essence and independence?
- Coaches in Ottawa, complemented by the Swansea model, utilise volunteers from faith communities. By contrast other projects in England and Wales are comprised by volunteers of faith and none. Does the religious/secular composition of volunteers have an impact upon effectiveness?
- Should there be a time-limit upon community chaplaincy engagement with ex-prisoners post-release: 18 weeks (Swansea); 3 or 6 months; unlimited duration (Canada)?
- Should the Community Chaplaincy Association develop a strategy for political engagement and influencing criminal and social policy by obtaining a seat on the NOMS Management Board?

The Community Chaplaincy Association has a crucial role to play during the next few years in formulating a strategy to realise its vision and mission, in conjunction with the contribution of each project. By engaging in this work it continues to give expression to the following:

Even today, Churches and religious groups are still in the forefront of those who agitate for penal reform or provide resources for needy offenders (Garland 1990: 204)

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