

**CSC Chaplaincy Impact Project
Community Engagement Report**

Chaplaincy Branch

2006

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2001, representatives of the Chaplaincy and Evaluation and Review Branches (ERB) gathered at the request of CSC Chaplaincy for a two-day session of brainstorming, reflection and dialogue. The purpose of the gathering was to initiate the development of a strategic framework for accountability and evaluation of Chaplaincy services. The initial consultation revealed the scope and breadth of Chaplaincy to be large and complex. The ERB then presented some initial thinking on a Chaplaincy evaluation framework to the Chaplaincy Leadership Team (CLT) in February 2001.

In the spring of 2001 the Director General of Chaplaincy presented the Chaplaincy Business Case to CSC's Executive Committee (EXCOM). The introduction of the document presented the context for the proposal:

Spiritual leadership involves walking towards a vision of ultimate compassion, goodness and beauty. Chaplaincy has attempted to offer this in words and action in the correctional milieu, both by being a caring presence to the prisoner and by contributing to shaping the CSC Mission and developing understanding of what a restorative justice might look like. It is a dynamic process, involving a variety of responses in a variety of different situations, and dependent on a faithful and committed personal journey. This proposal is presented to improve the effectiveness of this mission of Chaplaincy.¹

The Business Case presented some of the goals of the process in which Chaplaincy was beginning to engage. These included:

- developing a framework to clearly communicate and renew its vision;
- developing effective strategies to implement such a framework;
- identifying and communicating its impact in an accountable way that would facilitate review and evaluation;
- contributing effectively to the corporate reporting of both CSC and the faith communities.

The Chaplaincy Impact Project², working from a Results Management Accountability Framework (RMAF) and utilizing the Logic Model, addresses four major areas of Chaplaincy's work: pastoral care, community engagement, religious services, and religious/spiritual education. The Chaplaincy Leadership Team (CLT) decided that the Impact Project would respond to the criteria noted in the Business Case by evaluating these four main areas of chaplaincy.

Evaluation of four major criteria formed the basis of the data gathering at selected sites in institutions and the community: visible presence, pastoral ministry, integration, and

¹ Rev. Chris Carr, *Business Case for Chaplaincy*, August 2001, p. xx.

² See appendix for a definition of 'impact'.

offender/staff/family support. These criteria embrace all aspects of the chaplains' statement of work.

This evaluation does not constitute a theological study. Rather, the Chaplaincy Impact Project seeks to identify the impact of chaplaincy services on offenders, parolees, their families and staff. In order to effectively report on these aspects of chaplaincy, the evaluation attempts to bridge the gap between two distinct systems and languages – the correctional and the religious.

The first report in this series dealt with Pastoral Care in the context of institutional chaplaincy services. It can be found at http://infonet/chaplaincy/reports_e.shtml.

The present document constitutes the second report in this series. It looks at three aspects of Chaplaincy's community engagement: Community Chaplaincy, Community Ministry Boards and the Interfaith Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community chaplaincy component of the Chaplaincy Impact Project seeks to address two important questions: What is the impact of community chaplaincy? How can the impact be strengthened or improved?

A team that included a project officer, a peer community chaplain and a representative from the Interfaith Committee visited thirteen community sites in the five regions of Canada. They conducted face-to-face qualitative interviews with the following groups to collect the data: parolees, members of parolees' families, CSC parole and halfway house staff, CSC administrators, faith community representatives, community-based agencies and halfway houses.

The project objectives led to eighteen major findings. The first three findings relate to the visible presence of the community chaplaincy. The site evaluation team discovered that the location of the community chaplaincy office has an impact on the visibility and impact of the service itself. Those with an ongoing presence in the local parole office or halfway house were more likely to receive referrals from staff or provide support to staff. As well, the evaluation data indicated that community chaplains need to implement a systematic process to introduce community chaplaincy services to parole offices, halfway houses, agencies and faith communities. Another finding highlighted the difficulty community chaplains have in reaching parolees who live in large cities, given the high ratio of offenders to chaplains, in some cases 1,000 to 1.

The next three findings relate to the impact of the pastoral/spiritual ministry of the community chaplaincy. It is apparent that the one-to-one pastoral support provided by the community chaplain or volunteer plays a vital role in the successful reintegration of offenders. The evaluation team discovered through its interviewing process that over ninety percent of parolees believed that their spirituality and the faith community play a significant role in their reintegration. Yet with only twenty percent of the community chaplains interviewed possessing a pastoral plan to guide the delivery of their services, the degree of planning required to address the diverse demands of the work is not apparent at the present time.

The third group of findings relates to the integration of community chaplaincy, where appropriate, within the CSC, the faith communities and the community at large. A community chaplaincy cannot fulfil its goal that "nobody leaves alone" unless it knows when an offender is being released to the community it serves. A formal notification system does not exist to make them aware of an offender's release. Another finding relates to the important network between community chaplaincy and the faith communities.

The faith communities that work with ex-offenders and their families believe this work to be central to their mission. However, they need assistance from community chaplaincies in order to be prepared and equipped to receive offenders and their families. The next two findings are linked to the fourth objective of this phase of the project: assessing the impact community chaplaincy is having on parolees' families and staff. While community

chaplains throughout Canada offer a broad range of services for the families of offenders and parolees they also extend their services to CSC staff. Staff members who access a community chaplain or volunteer find it extremely helpful for their own support and wellness.

The final objective of the project addresses some general issues that relate to the impact, quality and effectiveness of community chaplaincy. Most of the community chaplains interviewed expressed concerns about volunteer recruitment. They stated that their community chaplaincies find it difficult to recruit people in the community to volunteer to the ministry of community chaplaincy. As well, seventy percent of community chaplains reported that their volunteer training program needed improvement. It appears that community chaplains also need more preparation for this ministry. Eighty percent of those interviewed stated that their orientation to the role of community chaplain could have been more effective.

The next finding recognizes that drawing on diverse networks to support their work is central to effective community chaplaincy. As a result, each community chaplaincy needs to assemble a data base of these resources. Another finding affirms the provision and facilitation of practical support that community chaplaincies provide for parolees and their families.

The final two findings of the evaluation relate to funding and evaluation. Funding of community chaplaincy is uneven across the country, ranging from little funding to funding at the rate of a full-time institutional chaplain. Lastly, in the opinion of the site evaluation team a more systematic evaluation of community chaplaincies could help each community chaplaincy determine whether it is achieving its mission and goals.

In the interest of the reintegration of offenders to the community, these recommendations aim to improve the impact of the community chaplaincy work of the CSC. The data collected affirms the impact Chaplaincy is having on its constituency while at the same time identifying ways it might improve its impact.

The appendices to this report contain two other aspects of the impact of Chaplaincy's community engagement, namely the Community Ministry Boards with whom CSC contracts and the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy, a group that represents the faith communities of Canada.

I. COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

1. Background

In Canada, chaplaincy has been present in prisons since the 1840s. Canon Tom James documented the story of chaplaincy in the prisons in his book, *A Living Tradition*. The Pastoral Care Report (2003) indicates that institutional chaplaincy still functions well in Canada. Each institution has a chaplain or chaplaincy team that provides religious and spiritual accompaniment for offenders. Chaplaincy is recognized as being a vital component of prison life.

However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s the breakdown in the continuum of care provided by CSC Chaplaincy became more and more apparent. The faith communities of Canada began to recognize that their responsibility to incarcerated persons went beyond prison visitation, as important as that was. Work needed to begin in the community to complement the work of the chaplains in the institutions.

So, in Moncton, New Brunswick and Kingston, Ontario the work of community chaplaincy began. In October 2005 people gathered in Moncton to celebrate twenty five years of providing chaplaincy services to offenders and their families.

Community chaplaincy is now an active community-based ministry throughout Canada, with twenty-six sites in the five regions. As this report will indicate, the scope of the services provided is extensive. Community chaplaincy has been described as a 'bridge' that links offenders and faith communities. One parole staff director described it as community-based support for parolees who have little or no support to help them re-enter the community.

CSC Chaplaincy continues to challenge itself in new ways. Recently it launched the *Nobody Leaves Alone* initiative, which has as its goal that all parolees have access to support as they re-enter Canadian society, something community chaplaincy is uniquely positioned to provide. In addition several other countries have studied the Canadian model of community chaplaincy and adapted and implemented internationally.

CSC community chaplaincy is now establishing its own 'living tradition!' What follows are the findings and observations drawn from the visits to the thirteen community chaplaincy centres where this tradition is being lived in Canada.

2. Methodology

The evaluation was carried out through the use of structured interviews with key personnel in the community, parolees and their family members, staff, and key informants from the faith communities visited.

The evaluation team consulted the regional chaplains in order to decide on site selection. Three community chaplaincies, where available, were selected from each of the five regions in Canada. The team visited the following sites: Moncton, Fredericton, St. John, Quebec City, Montreal Southwest, Laval, Kingston, Toronto, Windsor, Saskatoon, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria.

3. Objectives

The evaluation addresses the following objectives, as established in the Results Management Accountability Framework (RMAF).

Objective 1 - To establish the extent to which community chaplaincy is a visible presence in the community

Objective 2 - To assess the impact of pastoral/spiritual ministry on parolees and ex-offenders, their families, and staff

Objective 3 - To assess the integration of community chaplaincy into CSC services, faith communities and the community at large

Objective 4 - To assess the impact community chaplaincy is having in supporting parolees' families and staff.

Objective 5 - To address a number of general issues that relate to the impact, quality, and effectiveness of community chaplaincy

4. Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to express its appreciation to the community chaplaincies, parole offices, halfway houses, and agencies they visited. The team was grateful for the high level of cooperation they experienced throughout the five regions of Canada.

As well, special thanks to the peer chaplains who assisted with this evaluation.

5. Findings, Observations and Recommendations

Objective 1: To assess the extent to which community chaplaincy is a visible presence in the community

Each community chaplaincy is unique, with its nature and programs as diverse as the communities in which it exists. One of the strengths of community chaplaincy is its ability to adapt itself to its context.

Finding 1

- The location of the community chaplaincy office impacts community chaplaincy services. An ongoing visible presence of the community chaplain in a parole office or halfway house allows greater awareness of community chaplaincy services. Consequently the staff members are more likely to make referrals and access the community chaplain for their own support and needs.

The community chaplaincy offices visited by the evaluation team were located in many different types of buildings:

- church buildings
- community agencies
- parole offices
- downtown drop-in centres
- houses owned by the community chaplaincy
- offices rented by the community chaplaincy
- a halfway house

Most of the community chaplaincies visited were located in a church or a community chaplaincy centre in a building on church property. The benefits of linking a community chaplaincy physically to a church building include linkage to a faith community, reasonable rent, shared services (office, janitorial, parking) and access to a volunteer base. While some community chaplains located in a church facility wondered if this acted as a barrier for non-religious parolees, the offenders interviewed, both religious and non-religious, did not view the church location in a negative light. Nevertheless, some parole staff felt that a church location could represent a barrier for some parolees.

Four of the community chaplains have designated space at the local CSC parole office. The site evaluation team determined this to be an effective strategy to enhance the chaplaincy service.

“Having the community chaplain on site has made a huge difference. His clientele does not seem to mind because they see this as a safe place. The staff members see the community chaplain almost every day so that most have built a strong relationship with him. Consequently they are willing to make referrals to him and also access him for their own support and wellness. As the Director it also makes me feel that our work matters to the community knowing that a minister is present with us.”

The Director of a Parole Office

Community chaplains with a designated space in a CSC parole office stated that they were frequently invited to case conferences and consultations by staff. As they built relationships with staff other areas opened including ministry to staff, referrals, and networking opportunities. Staff with a resident community chaplain echoed the statements of the

community chaplain. Ninety five percent of parole/halfway house staff that have a community chaplaincy office on site stated that this was a positive factor in making referrals to community chaplaincy.

Two of the community chaplains interviewed had an office at a halfway house. This is also proving to be a key strategy for the same reasons outlined above. The community chaplains and the halfway house residents stated that a community chaplaincy office in the halfway house facilitated access and ministry between the community chaplain and the residents as well as the staff.

Community chaplains located in parole offices and halfway houses reported that access to CSC information systems was easier as well.

Those chaplains who had their office in a drop-in centre thought that the nature of a drop-in centre sometimes worked against the pastoral accompaniment of their target clientele. A drop-in welcomes all types of people including the homeless, addicts, prostitutes, and troubled youth. While all of these people have legitimate needs, the specific purpose of a CSC community chaplaincy is to accompany ex-offenders and their families as they attempt to rebuild their lives in the community.

Finding 2

- Ninety percent of community chaplaincies do not have a systematic, ongoing process of introducing their services to parole offices, halfway houses, community-based agencies and faith communities.

When the community chaplains were asked the question, “How frequently do you visit the parole office and halfway house facilities?” their responses varied. Those who have an office in parole have a weekly, if not daily, presence there. Some community chaplains appeared reluctant to visit the parole office on a weekly basis citing reasons like the busyness of parole officers or feeling unwelcome. Others made it a regular practice to visit parole, although most community chaplains polled did not have a scheduled time to visit the local parole office.

When asked how the ‘reach’ of community chaplaincy could be expanded, most staff and directors responded by requesting that the community chaplain increase his/her visible presence in parole offices, halfway houses, community-based agencies and faith communities. The majority of parole staff would like to see regular visits from the community chaplain. Parole staff interviewed also felt that a regular presentation of community chaplaincy and the services it offers help increase awareness of the service.

Staff at halfway house and community agencies repeated the views of parole staff. Some suggested that the chaplain post a visitation schedule in the halfway house. They also suggested that quarterly visits by the community chaplain to a ‘house meeting’ would be an excellent way of introducing community chaplaincy services to the residents.

“Community chaplaincy is a safe haven for offenders with little or no support. Speaking for myself as a parole officer, it is a place to find intelligent, non-judgmental and very caring people who put their hearts into their work. Speaking selfishly, community chaplaincy is also a safe haven for parole officers.”

A Parole Officer

Regular visits by the community chaplain or volunteers would increase the visibility of the service to ex-offenders and their families. A systematic strategy of introducing chaplaincy services to staff at parole offices, halfway houses and community agencies would likely increase referrals and expand the reach of the service.

Finding 3

- Community chaplains serving in large cities find it extremely difficult to provide an effective service to all offenders being released to their communities, given the high ratio of parolees to community chaplains.

The staff interviewed in large cities affirmed the excellent work of the community chaplains. However, they stated that they were concerned about the toll on the community chaplains, given the scope of the work. Some of the offenders interviewed expressed the same concern.

The community chaplains serving in large cities discussed the challenges of service delivery. They described the logistical difficulties in visiting the numerous halfway houses, parole offices, agencies and churches. Travel time can be extensive and time-consuming.

“Our community chaplain is doing a great job. However, I worry about him. The job is too big. There are too many guys for him to see. The city is too big for one person to service the population. We need more community chaplains....we need more volunteers... I worry that our community chaplain is going to burn himself out. He needs help!”

A Parole Officer

According to recent data, there are nearly one thousand parolees in the Greater Toronto/Hamilton Area of Ontario. At this point there is one full-time community chaplain and one part-time chaplain for women. The Lower Mainland of British Columbia has approximately six hundred and fifty parolees and one full-time community chaplain. The ratio of community chaplains to parolees makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to reach the offenders being released to these large cities.

Community chaplaincies servicing these large population areas need to develop a strategy of increased involvement of volunteers, faith-based agencies, community agencies and churches. The site evaluation teams concluded that in order to achieve offender

reintegration in the large cities a strategy is needed to focus more on networking with agencies and groups whose mission it is to support the marginalized in our society.³

The site evaluation teams concluded that unless community chaplaincy begins to view itself through the lens of networking, it will be incapable of realizing the goal that ‘nobody leaves alone’.

“Community support is one of the most important factors in reintegration. The bridge between the institution and the community is non-existent in most cases. Inside you have a feeling of community especially within the chapel. However, when you leave the security of the prison community, you find yourself in an environment that is much more hostile than the one you left. It’s nice to have someone there for a reality check every once in a while.”

A Circles of Support and Accountability Worker

Objective 2: To assess the impact of pastoral/spiritual ministry on parolees and ex-offenders, their families, and staff

Finding 4

- Parolees and their families view the pastoral support provided by community chaplains and volunteers as playing a vital role in their successful reintegration.

The community chaplain plays a significant role in the reintegration of offenders in the community. Pastoral ministry lies at the heart of the community chaplain’s work. According to the interviewees, this takes the form of accompaniment or one-to-one conversations.

Offenders in the community stated that they view the chaplain as a non-threatening, non-judgmental person who is ready to listen to them. The community chaplain does not have to write a report on their conversation and can therefore assure confidentiality.

What are some of the topics of conversation? According to respondents the list includes:

- abuse
- addictions
- life skills and problem solving

³ The networking model is being undertaken by Chaplaincy in the Oregon State Prison system. After observing the strengths and weaknesses of the Canadian model, Oregon has hired a community chaplain to develop a community chaplaincy model that uses existing faith-based agencies, churches and volunteers to support the re-entry of parolees to the community. The community chaplain receives notification of every offender leaving prison and the community to which he/she is being released. The community chaplain then notifies four regional coordinators who mobilize the faith communities to support the re-entry of this person to their communities. One of the tasks of the regional coordinators is to build community capacity to receive the parolees. The model recognizes that there are already many faith-based groups whose mission is ministry to the marginalized. The community chaplaincy becomes the bridge between the offender and the community. It is the link that prepares and fosters the relationship between both the offender and the faith community.

- family and relationship issues
- spirituality
- temptations
- crime cycle and relapse prevention
- health concerns
- legal issues
- practical issues and concerns
- money management
- roadblocks to wellness
- employment issues
- anxiety and grief work
- physical issues
- anger management

“I know this isn’t right, but in my past I have been a bank robber. Even though I have been out for a few years there are times that I feel like robbing a bank. I cannot share this with my parole officer because he would have to act. However, I can share these feelings with the community chaplain. I get it off my chest, he listens and it passes. I feel better for having shared it with another human being.”

An Ex-offender

When asked to describe the impact of the pastoral work of community chaplaincy, parolees’ responses included:

- There is always someone I can talk to.
- It has helped me with my health issues.
- Whenever I meet with the community chaplain I feel relief.
- All of my life I have struggled with self-esteem, but the community chaplain never looks down at me.
- It allowed me to be more forgiving of myself and accepting of who I am.”
- It helped me get involved in the church I attend.
- He helped me get an apartment.
- It has given me hope, reassurance.
- It strengthens my faith.
- He helped me deal with my fears.
- We talk through issues.
- It gives me an opportunity to volunteer.
- It has encouraged me.
- It has kept me out of trouble.
- He provided a listening ear.
- It has given me an awareness of my problems.
- It saved my life; it gave me a foundation to stand on before I got my wings.
- I found unconditional support.

Non judgmental listening lies at the very heart of the services that parolees access from community chaplaincy. Fifty-five percent of those interviewed stated that they draw on chaplaincy services at least once a week. According to the interviews with parolees, the community chaplains play a ‘priestly’⁴ role with parolees. They not only use the chaplain as a sounding board but as confidant or confessor with whom they share the most intimate issues of their lives. This illustrates the pastoral identity and responsibility of the community chaplain. When asked to estimate how they spent their time, community chaplains reported spending over fifty percent of it doing one-to-one pastoral accompaniment with offenders on parole.

The evaluation team also interviewed several family members who discussed the impact of the community chaplain’s pastoral ministry. Receiving a parolee back in the community entails a significant adjustment period for the family. Many family members do not have anyone with whom to discuss the issues they face as they try to assist their loved one with reintegration. According to those interviewed, the community chaplain often provides perspective as well as a listening ear for family members as they move through this adjustment period. Parolees’ family members view the community chaplain as a neutral person, neither a CSC employee nor a former associate of the ex-offender. The community chaplain also provides education to the family member concerning the issues being dealt with during this reintegration phase.

“As a mother of an offender, the community chaplain has provided some balance to my emotions as I deal with all the negative issues of incarceration. With no exposure to incarceration or drugs in my own life, it has been very overwhelming and disruptive to the family. There is a need for many more community chaplains. While their first contact may be the prisoner, there is much need for their assistance to family members and/or girlfriends, etc.”

The Mother of an Ex-offender

A number of parolees stated that they were people of ‘no faith’ or unattached to a faith community. Although they recognized that community chaplaincy had a spiritual component, they claimed to feel comfortable and accepted unconditionally regardless of their perspective.

Finding 5

- Eighty percent of the community chaplains interviewed did not have written pastoral plans to guide their work.

As noted above, the demands on a community chaplain can be considerable. Consequently they must prioritize work demands and establish plans to carry out their mission.

⁴ Chaplain as “priest” refers to the “intermediary” role the chaplain sometimes plays. The chaplain can be viewed as a representative of God or the “divine”, hearing the prayers and confessions of the seeker and offering words of hope, absolution and encouragement on behalf of the divine.

Some (20%) of the community chaplains have developed and implemented a pastoral plan to guide their work. The site evaluation team observed that this practice had several outcomes including increased accountability, self assessment and evaluation, enhanced communication, and team-building.

A pastoral planning guide, developed by NHQ Chaplaincy, is available to all community chaplains. However, the chaplain should not conceive and implement a pastoral plan in isolation, but rather, a tool for the community chaplaincy board, the community chaplain and volunteers.

Finding 6

- Ninety percent of the parolees interviewed stated that spirituality and the faith community played a significant role in their reintegration.

Ninety percent of parolees stated that spirituality was either important or very important to their successful reintegration. One ex-offender said that “for the first time in my life I have a desire to give, to listen, and to serve.” Another stated that “it is becoming apparent to me that my life can make a difference in my world. Believe me, there have been times when I felt that my life was worth absolutely nothing. I am thankful for the positive role model of the community chaplain and those I am getting to know at my church.”

“When our clients have reached the bottom it is the faith communities who reach them.”

A Parole Director

“I started going to the church across the road. I was very cautious at first because my case is very high-profile. The church people were also very cautious about me. In time we got to know each other. I explained to them the nature of my crimes...they listened. I wanted to get more involved in the church but they said to keep coming and, in time, I could get involved. After about a year, I got involved in the worship band. I now sing with the band. A few months later a little old lady in a Salvation Army uniform came up to me and said, ‘It’s great to have you in our church, but if you ever go back to jail again you will have me to deal with!’ I take her words very seriously!”

A Halfway House Resident

Community chaplains play a bridging role between the parolee and the faith community.⁵ They can explain to the faith communities the unique challenges parolees must face if they

⁵ A growing body of research is starting to support narrative claims like those noted above. Tom O’Connor, in his article “The Impact of Religious Programming on Recidivism, the Community and Prisons” (June, 1995) claims that religious and spiritual programs were making a difference in three ways: changing the lives of some offenders and reducing their recidivism; mobilizing, training and informing the community; and increasing the morale and pro-social behaviour of offenders. In their article, “A Model for Churches and Ex-Offenders” (1998), O’Connor, Ryan, and Parikh present data that suggest that participation of ex-offenders in a faith based program significantly reduced their level of need, their risk of recidivism, and their actual recidivism. Sumter (1999) found that inmates who were involved in religious activities in prison and believed more in a

are to successfully reintegrate into society. The community chaplain prepares and trains members of the faith community to respond appropriately to parolees and their families. As well, the community chaplain or volunteer is well positioned to explain the unique culture of the faith communities to parolees as they attempt to attach themselves to that community.

Many offenders and ex-offenders have not built relationships with positive role models in their lives. Dynamic risk factors, such as their associates, have often been linked to their criminality. Associating with a community of faith affords the potential for the ex-offender to build positive relationships in his/her life.

Objective 3: To assess the integration of community chaplaincy into the CSC, faith communities and the community at large

Finding 7

- Only ten percent of the community chaplaincies visited have access to information systems that notify them when an offender arrives in their community.

“The way the system works now, i.e. no formal notification is given to us when an offender enters our community, we rely on the mercy of others in the system to let us know who might be leaving alone.”

A Community Chaplain

When community chaplains were asked the question, “How do you know when an offender is released to your community?” they reported that only those who have offices in a CSC facility (parole office) have access to the CSC’s notification system. The other chaplains must rely on other means to access release information. These include the following:

- the monitoring of institutions in the region, particularly releasing institutions
- collaboration with chaplain colleagues
- referrals from other clients
- word of mouth
- phone calls
- prison chaplains
- halfway house staff
- family members
- ex-prisoners
- the media

In order to offer a well-functioning continuum of care, the community chaplain needs to systematically receive notification that offenders have arrived in the community. Community chaplains estimate that they are only reaching fifteen to twenty percent of the

transcendent God were significantly less likely to be rearrested. Baier and Wright (2001), after examining sixty studies, concluded that religious involvement had a positive association with preventing crime.

parolees in their communities. Those who access community chaplaincy value the service but, according to the parolees and staff interviewed, it appears that most parolees are not aware of community chaplaincy as a resource.

“The most important time for released offenders is the first two weeks. If they don’t have community support they will go bad. When they have no one, community chaplaincy will be there for them. It would be the last program I would cut.”

A Parole Director

Another way of strengthening the linkage between community chaplaincy and the CSC parole office is to include a representative from the parole office on the local community chaplaincy board. This has proven to be instrumental in improving communication and relationships in the two locations where it currently happens.

Finding 8

- Parole and halfway house staff refer offenders to community chaplaincy for many reasons. Community chaplaincy needs to communicate the breadth of the services it offers.

When parole officers were asked the question, “Why would you refer an offender to community chaplaincy?” thirty percent of the respondents linked their answer to religion. One parole officer summed up the feedback of many, “If a guy has been involved in chapel in prison, then I mention that there is a community chaplaincy service available to him.” As noted in Finding 1, this represents a limited view of community chaplaincy and its services.

“There are cases that don’t fall within my criteria and would otherwise fall through the cracks and end up on the road to destruction. For example, I deal with high-risk sex-offenders who are being released on their warrant expiry, but what about the Dangerous Offender who is looking for support within the community or the violent offender who is asking for help. It’s good to know that community chaplaincy can assist with these cases. I feel like he is part of our team.”

A Parole Officer

- to assist someone in need of support,
- to assist anyone who requires assistance of any kind,
- to assist women in need of daycare and emotional support;
- to link an offender with the faith community;
- to link an offender with community resources;
- to support offenders needing more time with their reintegration;
- to refer to the Lifers Group;
- to assist with reintegration into the community;

- because it is a free service;
- because there may be a good fit between the offender and the chaplain;
- to provide one-to-one support;
- to assist with step 5 of A.A.
- to offer healing of the spirit;
- to assist offenders in the community to find accommodation;
- to help offenders feel part of the community;
- to offer support to offenders who have no support in the community;
- The community chaplain is a non-threatening presence.
- It affords opportunities for the offenders to volunteer.
- It offers neutrality.
- Community chaplains can provide support in a way that a P.O. can't.
- ex-offenders need friends and community chaplaincy provides friendship
- They do good work with needy cases.
- By using him the resources get stretched a little further.

This is not an exhaustive list but indicates the variety of reasons that CSC staff makes a referral to a community chaplain.

“I found it the only place to turn when I had an offender released with a terminal illness....no community support, no money, no identification to access Social Services, and no one to conduct a funeral service. In the community chaplain I found someone who went beyond the call of duty. The time spent, the kind words, the encouragement, positive feedback, the practical support from getting welfare to making all the arrangements for the funeral, made it a profound human experience....for me, one that I will never forget.”

A Parole Officer

The offenders interviewed stated a number of ways by which they became aware of community chaplaincy. These included institutional chaplains, friends, family, halfway house staff, and local churches. Eighty-two percent of parolees stated that they were referred to community chaplaincy by someone other than a parole officer.

According to the offender respondents, institutional chaplains are the primary referral agents to community chaplaincy. Although the institutional chaplaincy is an important part of the continuum of care, community chaplaincy needs to develop the referral possibilities in order to expand its reach.

Finding 9

- The faith communities that are working with ex-offenders and their families believe this work to be central to their mission. However, faith communities need to be prepared and equipped to receive offenders and their families.

The linkage between an ex-offender and a faith community is sometimes challenging. Parolees who re-establish links often feel shame and awkwardness, and faith communities experience apprehension. Offenders who are trying to establish a new connection to a faith community after incarceration need orientation as they deal with all of the dynamics of re-entry after a prolonged period of incarceration. The added dimension of coming to terms with ordinary citizens in a pro-social way can present a great challenge.

“I had a bad experience with a church. The minister would not allow this member to have coffee with me. I chose not to go to that church anymore. I told him that he wasn’t a Christian.”

A Parolee

The community chaplain or community chaplaincy volunteer acting as a bridge between the former prisoner and the world of the faith community faces a dual challenge. Firstly, they seek to assist offenders with the culture shock they will experience in many faith communities. Secondly, they assist the faith community to get ready for the entrance of a recently incarcerated person.

“Our church started to reach out to ex-offenders and their families when we asked ourselves the question, “What kind of church do we want to be?” We decided that we needed to get away from the idea that the church is only a place where good people are. Slowly we started to build relationships with all people including those that had done time. It was the best decision our church ever made.”

A Pastor

Pastors who were interviewed by the evaluation team noted these challenges. Some pastors believed that their faith community’s sense of mission and purpose helped them face the challenge of reintegration. They asked questions like, “Who are we called to be and whom do we need to be reaching?” Other Pastors noted that it has taken a long time to prepare their members to be welcoming to parolees and their families. Some of the faith communities have “paid the price” for reaching out to this clientele through critical incidents and became discouraged and afraid. They have either abandoned the work or taken steps to mitigate risk. Most of those interviewed noted the challenges but have chosen to remain faithful to their mission.

“When I came out of prison I was socially introverted and shy. When I came to this community chaplaincy I was treated like a person. It helped me to come out of myself slowly. I learned how to mix with others and start feeling good about myself.”

An Ex-offender in the Community

Objective 4: To assess the impact community chaplaincy is having on supporting offenders’ families and staff

Finding 10

- Community chaplaincies offer a broad range of support services for families of offenders.

Community chaplaincies consider support for family members of parolees to be part of their mandate. However, thirty percent stated that they did not have the time to provide these services. Seventy percent reported that they offer a broad range of support for families of parolees including the following:

- one-to-one counselling for spouses, partners, parents and children of offenders
- marital counselling, retreats for couples
- emergency accommodation
- money management classes
- partners of ex-offenders group
- referral services
- transportation
- recovery and storage of personal items
- education
- summer camp for children

“When my husband went to jail I felt a great deal of shame. My friends distanced themselves from me. I felt shunned by them. There was so much I didn’t understand. My husband had never committed a crime before. Without the community chaplain I could not have survived this time. He listened to me. He explained the criminal justice system to me. He gave me a ride to the institution when I was really stuck. Now, since my husband has been released, he checks in with us. I just don’t know what I would have done without him.”

The Wife of an Offender

When parole officers and halfway house staff were interviewed, most seemed unaware of the work community chaplaincies do with the families of parolees.

Finding 11

- Staff who access community chaplaincy services find it extremely helpful for their own support and wellness. Many staff interviewed place a high value on spirituality as a positive factor in the reintegration of offenders.

“Having worked with CSC so long, I have become cynical, as many do, working in an environment that, to be forthright, lacks integrity. Community chaplaincy has been the most positive part of my career here. It really has!”

A Parole Officer

Another component of the statement of work for a community chaplain is ministry with staff. Staff members working in parole offices and halfway houses often undergo times of stress and pressure. Although E.A.P. programs are available, some access the community chaplain for personal counselling and support.

Ministry to staff is often an outcome of the building of a relationship between the community chaplain and staff members. As noted in Finding 2, when the community chaplain is visibly present, ministry to staff is enhanced.

“When my mother died I did not expect anyone from the office to attend her funeral. The service was being held in a community that was almost three hours drive from the office. You have no idea how much it moved me when I looked down at those who had gathered and saw the face of our community chaplain. I will never forget it!”
A Parole Officer

Some parole officers noted the role played by community chaplains during the time of the murder of a parole officer. Many parole officers felt vulnerable and needed to talk about their feelings. Many visited the community chaplain for their own personal support. As well, some mentioned the fact that community chaplains conducted memorial services to honour the memory of the slain officer. This formal expression was seen as meaningful. A parole office director mentioned the role that the community chaplain played when media and public pressure focussed on the office. She commented on how the presence and interaction of the community chaplain had a calming influence on the staff as they saw members of the community who did not share the opinions being expressed in the media.

According to the data assembled throughout the interviewing process, staff places a high value on spirituality. When asked to rate the importance of spirituality, eighty-one percent of staff rated it as being ‘very important’ to them. Although staff members have access to community resources, community chaplains offer them on-site pastoral support.

However, most parole officers and halfway house staff remained unaware that community chaplains were available to them. The availability of this resource needs to be communicated more effectively.

Objective 5

To address a number of general issues that relate to the impact, quality, and effectiveness of community chaplaincy

Finding 12

- Community chaplaincies are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers to assist in the reintegration of offenders, although the ones they have are dedicated to this mission.

“It’s much easier to recruit volunteers to work with the incarcerated than it is to get them to volunteer to work with offenders in the community.”

A Prison Chaplain

Many dedicated volunteers support community chaplaincies throughout the country. Interviews with chaplains underscored this fact. They expressed gratitude for the many hours offered by their volunteers. The site evaluation teams interviewed several volunteers and were impressed by them.

However, community chaplains as well as their boards expressed the concern that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers to assist in the reintegration of offenders. Reasons for this include the sense that volunteers may feel more vulnerable in the absence of the security provided in correctional institutions.

Negative media stories and images concerning high-profile offenders may result in a hardening of public opinion against crime and criminals and present a barrier to volunteer recruitment. As well, many other good causes in the community attract the attention of volunteers.

In order to maintain motivated volunteers it is important to replenish the volunteer pool. Given the increasing demands on community chaplains, especially in the large cities, effective community chaplaincy will increasingly rely on a strong volunteer infrastructure. A thoughtful, well-planned volunteer recruitment strategy needs to be implemented to ensure the sustainability of community chaplaincy. An effective volunteer ministry must include the nurture, recruitment, management, orientation, training, evaluation, ongoing support, and recognition of volunteers.

Finding 13

- Seventy percent of community chaplains reported that their volunteer training program needed improvement.

Many of the community chaplains stated that their volunteer training program was inadequate. This also has an impact on recruitment. To be adequately prepared to assist as volunteers community members need to understand the special needs of offenders, their families, their culture, the criminal justice system, boundaries and other issues. Proper screening, training and support are essential.

Some community chaplaincies have called on the CSC to provide assistance in this regard. Creative approaches include inviting CSC staff to conduct training workshops. One community chaplain is exploring a collaborative strategy with other faith-based and community-based groups.

A volunteer training manual could be developed specifically for community volunteers. NHQ Chaplaincy might act as a resource in this area as well.

Finding 14

- Eighty percent of the community chaplains interviewed stated that the orientation and training to prepare them for the role of community chaplain could have been more effective.

Community chaplains require specialized orientation and training to prepare them for their role. Although some have had firsthand experiences of the offender culture, many enter the position from other areas of ministry. The work is complex and requires an understanding of the criminal justice system, criminogenic factors, offender culture, reintegration strategies, volunteer management, and knowledge of managerial, governance and contract realities.

Some community chaplains interviewed referred to orientation events in Mississauga (2003) and Fredericton (1998) as having a meaningful impact on their education and understanding of community chaplaincy. Regular orientation events would effectively prepare and sustain community chaplains for the work of community chaplaincy.

Finding 15

- Community chaplains draw on many networks to support their work. Each community chaplaincy should assemble a data base of these resources for its use.

Community chaplains rely on networks in the community to support them in the reintegration task. The community chaplains were asked to cite three resources that they had accessed in their networks during the week of their interview. What follows is a sample of some of their responses.

- John Howard Society
- Circles of Support and Accountability
- Prison Fellowship Angel Tree
- The Connecting Link
- Toronto Community Care Access Centre
- A halfway house
- A probation office
- The Learning Centre
- Thomas More Institute
- Little Burgundy Employment Centre
- St. Columbia House
- A downtown coffee house
- Salvation Army
- A group home
- YMCA
- Centre for Restorative Justice
- Bratshaw Youth and Family Services
- Elizabeth Fry

- The Mustard Seed
- A Christian bookstore
- A furniture depot
- '211'
- Shepherd's Guide
- Community Justice Ministries staff
- Ryndale House (a men's shelter)
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Man-to-Man/Woman-to-Woman
- The police department
- A victims' unit

“The community chaplain is the bridge between the institution and the community. He/she supplies the connections to the support resources for the ex-offender and his/her family. He/she is actively involved both inside and outside the prison supporting both the offender and his/her family through the prison and reintegration process.”

The Director of a Community Agency

The site evaluation team noted that when they asked community chaplains to provide a data base of community resources only a few were able to do so. Such a data base would be a useful resource for successive community chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers.

Finding 16

- Many community chaplaincies provide or facilitate practical support for offenders and their families.

“From soup to nuts the community chaplain is involved either directly or indirectly with not only the offenders and his family, but also has strong connections to the professional community, i.e. police, social services, etc....and the community at large, i.e. schools, churches, neighbourhoods.”

The Director of a Community Agency

An unexpected finding for site evaluation team members was the extent to which community chaplaincy tries to meet the practical needs of the ex-offenders and their families. While the practical help given assists in building relationships and trust, for many re-entering the community the practical concerns take precedence over everything else. Many community chaplaincies are involved in ensuring that parolees have their basic human needs met. Some community chaplaincies provide these through their own food banks, meal centres, temporary shelter and clothing depots. However, most rely on other networks in the community to assist with these basic needs. Some of the practical services provided by the community chaplaincies included:

- emergency shelter
- food bank
- clothing depot
- meal centre providing a daily meal
- vouchers to access food
- vouchers for clothing and shelter
- transportation
- transit passes
- welcome home kits
- assistance with the social welfare process
- assistance with getting a driver's license
- providing computer time
- employment support and services
- moving truck for furniture and personal items
- furniture and vouchers for used furniture
- money management assistance
- orientation to services in the community
- personal hygiene course

CSC staff members who are aware of the practical services provided by local community chaplaincies find it to be a helpful resource. Offenders released from prison often feel intimidated and disoriented. The community chaplain can provide friendship and assistance during these early days of reintegration. One community chaplain uses a weekly 'bread run' to maintain ongoing relationships with ex-offenders and their families.

“I don't know what I would have done without the community chaplain [during] those first few weeks after I was released. I had not been on the outside for over twenty years. Everything had changed and I felt like I was an alien visiting another planet. The community chaplain walked with me during those first few weeks and months. He helped me get set up in my apartment....gave me food....helped me get a job...and more importantly, met me for coffee when I needed someone to talk to. Now that I have been out for two years, I try to give back. I help guys move when they first get out of jail and I volunteer at the meal centre

An Ex-offender

Finding 17

- Funding of community chaplaincy is uneven across the country, ranging from limited funding to funding at the rate of a full-time institutional chaplain.

The sites visits demonstrated that funding for community chaplaincy is uneven throughout the country. While cities such as Toronto and Vancouver have a community chaplain funded at the level of a full-time institutional chaplain, other centres such as Halifax have a volunteer chaplain who receives minimal funding for his work.

Despite NHQ Chaplaincy's request for community chaplaincy to be funded at one dollar per day per parolee, the current level remains at 27 cents/day. Increased funding would increase the ability of community chaplaincies across Canada to support the safe re-entry of released offenders.

A few of the sites visited are exploring, or have in place, additional funding to supplement the CSC funding. In the Atlantic Region two of the Provinces (New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) have federal-provincial partnerships in place by which Province matches what the CSC provides. Other community chaplaincies are exploring similar arrangements. Some community chaplaincies are applying to private foundations and faith communities for funding. Others conduct various fund-raising events throughout the year. Most community chaplaincies have a charitable donations number so that they can receive private donations and issue tax receipts. Funding initiatives such as these help build the financial infrastructure for ongoing, effective community chaplaincy.

Finding 18

- A more systematic evaluation of community chaplaincies would help each community chaplaincy determine whether it is achieving its mission and its goals.

The community chaplains interviewed saw the absence of ongoing evaluation of community chaplaincy services as a weakness. Although each community chaplaincy submits a monthly indicator report, community chaplains reported that, in almost all cases, neither the community chaplaincy board nor the regional chaplain carries out systematic evaluations.

An annual evaluation can ensure the community chaplaincy board and CSC Chaplaincy that the community chaplaincy is achieving its purposes and goals. It provides the stakeholders an opportunity to evaluate what has happened during the past year and make adjustments and strategic plans for the upcoming year.

The annual evaluation should be linked to the pastoral plan. This practice would make community chaplaincy boards and the regional chaplain aware of goals and plans for each year. As well, it would give the board, the regional chaplain and the community chaplain the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the pastoral plan and discuss changes where necessary.

6. STRATEGIES FOR CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCIES

As noted above, many parolees, their families, CSC staff and community chaplains were interviewed as part of this process. Certain 'best practices' emerged as the fourteen sites were visited. What follows are the components of a healthy community chaplaincy based on the interviews and observations of the site evaluation teams. Recommendations are offered to community chaplaincies and the CSC to sustain and strengthen the impact of the service.

I Promotion and Communication

- Community chaplains schedule a systematic, ongoing visitation plan to present chaplaincy services to parole officers, halfway house staff and residents, community-based agencies and faith communities.
- Community chaplaincy communicates that it is a support network available to all offenders in the community, not only those for whom religion/spirituality is important. This support includes the provision of practical support to parolees, their families.
- Community chaplaincies include staff awareness training in its pastoral plan to make CSC staff aware of the breadth of services offered to parolees and their families as well as providing support to staff.

II Strategic Planning

Internal

- Community chaplaincies develop and implement a written pastoral plan to guide the delivery of their services.
- Community chaplains and their boards incorporate a volunteer recruitment and training strategy into their pastoral plans and review it annually.
- The community chaplaincy office devises and maintains a data base of resources in the community that support the needs of offenders.
- Each community chaplaincy explores additional funding sources through provincial governments, foundations, the faith community and the community at large.

External

- Community chaplains and their boards, especially those in the large cities, develop a strategy to utilize existing community-based networks/partnerships to expand the reach of community chaplaincy services.
- The community chaplaincy invites a representative from the local CSC parole office to attend board meetings.
- The community chaplaincy's pastoral plan schedules time to assist local faith communities prepare for the task of offender reintegration.

Recommendation One - That each community chaplaincy develop and implement an annual pastoral plan that includes the 'best practices' noted above to guide and evaluate the delivery of its services.

III CSC Concerns/Obligations

CSC (Chaplaincy)

- Regional Chaplains make an annual presentation on community chaplaincy to the Regional Management Committee.
- The CSC orientation process includes specialized workshops for community chaplains; in addition to a review of the statement of work, the pastoral identity of the community chaplain is emphasized.
- CSC Chaplaincy collaborates with the CSC Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector, national and regional chaplaincy, community chaplaincy, and Circles of Support and Accountability in the development of a training manual for community chaplaincy volunteers.
- CSC Chaplaincy provides periodic workshops for community chaplains to discuss their particular focus.
- Regional Chaplains meet with each community chaplaincy in their region annually to review the pastoral plan and facilitate the evaluation of community chaplaincy services.

Recommendation Two - That Regional chaplains meet with each community chaplaincy at least once a year to review their pastoral plans and provide an annual update on chaplaincy to the Regional Management Committee (RMC)

CSC

- CSC provides adequate funding to sustain and increase chaplaincy services in the interest of improved public safety.
- CSC provides community chaplains with timely notification of offenders coming to their service area, making them aware of their presence in the community and their risk factors/dynamics.
- Space is provided at local CSC parole offices/halfway houses to establish a regular, ongoing community chaplaincy presence.

Recommendation Three - That the CSC provide increased financial resources (\$1.00 per parolee per day) and space in CSC parole offices/halfway houses; and that the CSC notify community chaplains when an offender arrives in the community in order to sustain and increase the impact of chaplaincy services in the interest of public safety.

7. CONCLUSION

Although CSC community chaplaincy is only twenty-five years old, it has a history of making a difference in the lives of parolees, their families and staff. The site evaluation teams were privileged to hear the narratives of the parolees who are successfully reintegrating into communities throughout Canada. These success stories do not make the headlines in the media. One parole officer said, “Community Chaplaincy has many success stories. They need to be shared more often with the community.”

Overall, the evaluation team found that community chaplaincy is being delivered by a dedicated and creative group of chaplains and volunteers. Their work is important to the lives of parolees and staff and is integral to the re-entry of parolees. While community chaplains may be working in the shadows, their work is nonetheless appreciated by the “user group” that accesses community chaplaincy frequently. The one-to-one pastoral work of the community chaplain and his/her volunteers is making a difference in our communities, making them safer.

It is hoped that as the CSC and the chaplaincy community respond to the suggestions above, the ministry of community chaplaincy will continue to grow and realise the vision that “nobody leaves alone.”

“Community chaplaincy needs to have the *Best Kept Secret of the Correctional System* tag removed!

A Community Chaplain

APPENDICES

PREFACE

The first two appendices include reports on two community-based groups: Community Ministry Boards and the Interfaith Committee.

Thousands of volunteer hours are offered every year by members of the Community Ministry Boards and the Interfaith Committee, providing a vital link in the community for offenders, families and parolees.

The reports seek to bring clarity to the contractual obligations of the two groups.

The final appendix presents a glossary of terms.

APPENDIX I. COMMUNITY MINISTRY BOARDS

1. Background

This section of the report contains the second phase of Community Engagement evaluations. The goal of this process has been to conduct an analysis of the impact of the Community Ministry Boards that govern CSC Chaplaincy's community chaplaincy work. This report will summarize the findings and offer recommendations designed to strengthen the impact of Community Ministry Boards.

2. Evaluation Criteria

In order to gauge the impact of the Community Boards, the following evaluation criteria have been selected:

- I. Mission and Vision of Community Boards - What is the vision that the Community Ministry Boards bring to their work? What is their mission? How is it communicated? Is it clearly understood by their constituents?
- II. Goals and Objectives - How do the Boards seek to realize their mission? What are their strategic objectives? What are their goals? How do the Boards know when these have been reached?
- III. Governance - How do Boards decide their composition? Does their composition reflect the breadth of the community and of the faith community? What obligations do the Board members have? Why do they serve on these Boards? Do the Boards have a constitution? Is an agenda forwarded to the members ahead of time? Who sets the agenda? Are minutes taken and distributed? Is there an annual meeting? How long do members serve? How is money managed? Are there different "types" of Boards?
- IV. Relationship to the Community Chaplain - How are the community chaplains accountable to the Boards? What monitoring processes exist? Is a clear statement of work followed? What is the nature of the relationship between the Boards and the chaplains? Do the chaplains attend all of the Board meetings? Do the chaplains report regularly to the Boards? From the chaplains' point of view, what are the issues and concerns they have in relation to their Boards? How can this relationship be strengthened?
- V. Relationship to the CSC - How often do the Boards meet with the Regional Chaplain? Are there any concerns about this relationship? How can this relationship be strengthened?
- VI. Ministry Issues - What percentage of the clientele served by this ministry consists of federal offenders or federal ex-offenders? How effective is the volunteer ministry?

How could its impact be improved? Does this ministry network with other community ministries? Does it work with families of offenders and ex-offenders? How could this ministry have a greater impact?

3. Methodology

Following the pattern established in the Pastoral Care component of the evaluation, a sampling of sites from the five regions of Canada was selected for gathering data to gauge the impact of Community Boards and address the evaluation criteria.

The following sites were visited:

Pacific	Victoria Community Chaplaincy Vancouver Community Chaplaincy
Prairies	the Mustard Seed (Edmonton) Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy
Ontario	Peterborough Community Chaplaincy Toronto Community Chaplaincy Kingston Community Chaplaincy
Quebec	Montreal Community Chaplaincy Southwest Community Chaplaincy Project Oxygen
Atlantic	Moncton Community Chaplaincy Charlottetown Community Chaplaincy

It was decided that three instruments would be used to obtain the data:

- a Board Member Questionnaire administered to members of the Community Ministry Boards,
- a Community Chaplain Questionnaire administered to the community chaplains, and
- a Board Document Checklist incorporated into these two questionnaires.

The information was gathered at the sites by the Project Officer from NHQ Chaplaincy. Where possible, the Project Officer was accompanied by a member of the Interfaith Committee (IFC) to meet with the Board or at least the Board's chairperson. The purpose of the meetings was to receive the questionnaires and to discuss issues and concerns arising from them.

The information in this report draws on the questionnaires and the notes made by the Project Officer at meetings with the various Community Boards. The text includes summaries of responses from those surveyed.

Like the Pastoral Care Report, the nature of this analysis is “qualitative research.” Qualitative evaluation or research “seeks to discover the meaning of a human experience and to communicate this understanding to the reader. It does this through narrative rather than through numbers, with the understanding that its narrative words evoke the human experience attached to them.”⁶ Most qualitative research employs face-to-face interviews to make meaning, encouraging the researcher to engage the interviewee in the examination of a question. Although there will be quantitative results in what follows, their value will be assessed in terms of the ability of the numbers to speak to issues of impact and qualitative discussion.

4. Quality Characteristics of an Effective Board

The site evaluation team, through its qualitative interviews, observed that Boards that are having a strong impact on ex-offenders, their families, staff, and the community possess some or all of the following quality characteristics:

- ✓ a strong sense of mission and purpose
- ✓ renewal of membership to prevent “burnout” and stagnation
- ✓ a plan to recruit new members
- ✓ a process to evaluate and renew its mission
- ✓ goals and plans that are monitored on a regular basis
- ✓ an understanding of the Board’s role
- ✓ well-defined responsibilities for Board members which are communicated and understood
- ✓ Board orientation for new members
- ✓ A mechanism to monitor attendance of its members, addressing concerns on a one-to-one basis
- ✓ an open relationship with the community chaplain
- ✓ a balance between support and accountability in the Board’s relationship with the community chaplain
- ✓ a communication strategy to engage the community
- ✓ integrity in all areas of work

⁶ Vandecreek et al, *Research in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (1994)

- ✓ a “rapid response” strategy when required
- ✓ a commitment to fostering a good relationship with CSC institutions and personnel
- ✓ a strategy to deal with the challenging clinical issues of the community chaplaincy
- ✓ an ongoing “in service” training program
- ✓ systems to acquire the names of offenders being released into the community
- ✓ access to a broad funding base
- ✓ ways to recognize and affirm Board members
- ✓ a constitution
- ✓ an agenda circulated in advance of Board meetings
- ✓ minutes circulated to its members following the meetings
- ✓ an Annual Meeting and publication of an Annual Report to communicate the Board’s work to its stakeholders
- ✓ a strategy to manage risk

5. Demographics

1. The Many Faces of Community Ministry Boards

As might be expected, the unique needs, demographics, and resources in each community find diverse expression in the history, composition and operation of Community Ministry Boards. Still, while each Board is unique, there are common traits that some Boards share. What follows is an attempt to classify the types of Boards that participated in this evaluation.

(a) Boards founded by a group of people interested in providing community reintegration for offenders and ex-offenders - The first community chaplaincy in Canada was established twenty-five years ago in Moncton, New Brunswick. It was formed to meet a perceived need in the community to accompany and support offenders “outside of the gate.” The Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy shares similarities to the Moncton Board: Both sprang up from the community with people gathering around the goal of offender reintegration.

(b) Boards founded by a community chaplain - An example of this is the Peterborough Community Chaplaincy. This group was born of the vision of the community chaplain who had been working with the Circles of Support and Accountability program in his

community. With the help of a local pastor he organized a Board to meet the needs of offenders and ex-offenders in the community.

(c) Boards initiated by a CSC employee, usually the Regional Chaplain - Victoria Community Chaplaincy is an example of a Regional Chaplain acting as a catalyst to encourage the formation of a community-based ministry for ex-offenders and their families. At his urging, the Board was formed by members of the community for the purpose of providing direction to the two community chaplains under contract with the region.

(d) Boards formed as part of a larger ministry - Examples of this type are the Mustard Seed and the Charlottetown Community Chaplaincy.

(e) Advisory Committees formed to accompany the ministries of community chaplains being fully funded by CSC Chaplaincy - There are currently two examples of this model: Toronto and Vancouver Community Chaplaincies. An Advisory Committee meets with the community chaplain for support, information exchange and networking.

(f) Boards formed by a Council that is already functioning in the community - Examples of this type are the Kingston Community Chaplaincy and the Charlottetown Community Chaplaincy.

(g) Boards formed to provide support and networking for multiple community ministries who work in the area of criminal and restorative justice. An example of this is the Montreal Community Chaplaincy

The site evaluation teams did not draw any conclusions as to which type of Board is most effective; it merely observed what exists and recognized the uniqueness of each Board. As each community is unique, so the Community Chaplaincy Boards are unique.

2. Profile of a Board Member

Like the communities to which they belong, Board members represent a fairly diverse demographic.

In terms of faith communities, the Board members interviewed identified with the following groups: Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Church of God, Unitarian, Lutheran, Anglican, United, Church of Christ, and “no affiliation”.

The age of the Board members tended to range from middle age to seniors and the racial composition was primarily Caucasian.

Sixty percent of the Board members interviewed had served on their Boards for two years or less. Forty percent of the Board members had been serving on the Board between four and fifteen consecutive years.

Each Board member was asked the question, “Why did you agree to become a Board member?” The following is a summary of the responses.

- They were attracted to the mission and purposes of the Board.
- They were invited by a Board member or community chaplain to join.
- They had a desire to serve others.
- They wanted to help prevent new victims and build a safer community.
- They were already involved in criminal justice work and hoped to make a further contribution.
- They had a desire to offer their gifts and abilities to the Board. These included fiscal management, fundraising, organizational skills, and professional training.

Another interview question related to their role as Board members. When asked to define their role, their responses included:

- to support and encourage the community chaplain and staff;
- to fulfil a formal role (chairperson, secretary, treasurer, committee chair);
- to take on an informal roles (such as “in-reach”, sharing their experience in corrections, expertise in working with volunteers, “ideas person”, organizational skills, “I’m an encourager”); and
- to form and shape policy.

Membership on a Board includes certain obligations. When interviewed, the Board members gave the following responses to the question, “What are your obligations as a Board member?”

- attend all Board meetings;
- offer prayer support;
- encourage and support the community chaplain;
- help with fundraising;
- serve on committees as assigned;
- share in the management of the ministry;
- be a good steward of the funds;
- demonstrate integrity;
- offer feedback;
- present the needs of community chaplaincy to the wider community;
- work cooperatively with other Board members; and
- offers new perspectives.

Members were asked to estimate how much time per month they give to the Board. The answers ranged between zero to thirty hours, with the average about six hours a month. In addition, they were asked whether they gave any “ministry hours” beyond what they gave to their Board work. Twenty percent (20%) said that they did not give “ministry hours”, nor did they think that was their role as a Board member. Eighty percent (80%) said they did provide “volunteer hours” with estimates ranging from one to eighty hours per month.

6. Key Findings

Finding 1 Mission and Vision

Board members and community chaplains were asked the question, “What is the mission of your Board?” The responses may be broadly summarized in the following way:

(a) To provide direction, support, management and accountability for the community chaplaincy program in their local community - Many viewed themselves as having a supportive role. Rather than directing the program, they were on the Board to give feedback and encouragement to the community chaplain or community ministry staff. They viewed the Board meetings as a forum to make the community chaplain accountable to a group and to offer their feedback and support.

(b) To act as a bridge between the community chaplaincy program and the community at large - Board members cited public education, volunteer recruitment and training, and community capacity building as strategic expressions of the metaphor of the “bridge”. One Board member said, “The mission of the Board is to deepen awareness in the faith communities of the issues faced by people touched by crime.”

(c) To facilitate service - Those who held this view of the mission spoke of volunteer service opportunities they provide for the community as well as the ex-offenders. One Board member said that their mission was “to not only meet the needs of the offenders, but also to help offenders serve the community that served them.”

(d) To build community - One community chaplain said that the role of his Board was to “help restore the fabric of community.”

(e) To help create a safer community - A common response to the question was the desire to protect the community and assist the offenders to return to wholeness.

(f) To be a prophetic voice - Others saw their mission as being a prophetic voice to their communities, their churches, their neighbours, and the CSC.

(g) To be the “caretakers” of property and other resources - When asked about mission, some members saw their Board as being the stewards of financial and human resources.

(h) To cast a vision before the community chaplaincy staff and community - Some Board members viewed themselves as “vision casters”, that is people who would help create and sustain a vision for offender reintegration into their communities.

(i) To be a conduit for communication - This communication takes on several forms: newsletters, community information events, presentations to their faith communities.

(j) To network in the community - Many cited the magnitude of the task of reintegration and saw their mission as networking with other groups, agencies, churches and individuals who are engaged in this work.

(k) To be fiscal managers and fundraisers - Some Board members felt the mission of their Board was to build a financial base to support the ministry of community chaplaincy and then manage the financial resources. One member said, “We need to free the chaplain from financial anxiety and build and manage a financial support base that will sustain the ministry – that’s our mission.”

Many of the Boards were in rediscovering or revising their development. When Board members spoke of this, there was a great deal of excitement and energy. Others spoke of the need to undertake such a process because it had not been done for a long time. Some Boards recently conducted a visioning retreat and testified to the renewal it brought to their Board and its ministry.

Nearly all of the Board members and community chaplains interviewed had an idea of the mission of their Board. However, only a few of them had an effective way of communicating this mission to their constituents.

When community chaplains were asked to describe how they help fulfill the mission of the Board, their responses included:

- providing the “direct service” of community chaplaincy, while also helping the Board envision the “hands-on work”;
- structuring the job description to serve the Board according to their mandate;
- meeting with Board members one-on-one;
- providing input and feedback on planning issues;
- keeping the vision in front of the Board;
- providing ongoing education;
- being accountable;
- reporting on a regular basis to help the Board understand the issues. One community chaplain summarized the nature of the reporting in the following way: “To report monthly to the Board about priorities and strategies that have implications for policy, procedures and vision.”

Finding 2 Goals and Objectives

While a mission statement that expresses the Board’s vision and purpose is foundational, it must be accompanied by planning and action if the Board is to realize its mission. The following is a summary of how Board members and community chaplains responded to the question “What are some of the goals that help the Board realize its mission?”

- To do fundraising so that our Board is not so dependent on CSC funding
- To develop a strong financial plan to support and sustain the ministry of community chaplaincy
- To maintain a broad multi-faith base to support the community chaplaincy

- To bring offenders and the faith community together
- To establish and maintain close relationships with other groups and agencies committed to restorative justice and offender reintegration
- To expand the Board to more fully represent the community
- To improve communication through a regular newsletter and public presentations
- To recruit, train, and support volunteers for the community chaplaincy
- To acquire a suitable building that would act as a gathering place for ex-offenders and provide an office for the community chaplain
- To create more unity on the Board
- To respond to new challenges in our community
- To expand the reach of our community chaplaincy to more offenders and ex-offenders
- To lobby “people in power” to support our ministry
- To understand the needs of victims as well as offenders
- To provide employment guidance for ex-offenders
- To do more for the families of offenders and ex-offenders

These goals were stated by the Board members through questionnaires and interviews, but only one of the Boards produced documentation outlining short- and long-term goals. Some of the Board members had difficulty recalling the goals of the Board. There appears to be a need to find a way to effectively communicate these goals among Board members and to the larger community.

As well, there did not appear to be a process for determining whether these goals were being met. Only one Board built in strategic planning to make it accountable for accomplishing these goals. It seems that a monitoring process needs to be put in place by the Boards to determine whether they are achieving their goals and objectives.

Finding 3 Governance

One set of the questions brought to this project concerned the composition of the Boards. Who is serving on them? How is their makeup decided? Does their membership reflect the breadth of the community?

Board composition was dealt with above under “Profile of a Board Member.” Several Board members and community chaplains expressed concern about the breadth of representation on the Board. Ideally a community Board should mirror the demographics of the community to a certain extent.

The denominational “mix” of Board members is noted above. Based on the sample, twenty five percent (25%) of Board members across the country are Roman Catholic and seventy five percent (75%) are Protestant. Although there are one or two examples of non-Christian Boards and Board members, the absence of Board members from other faith traditions is noticeable. This becomes problematic in light of the growing number of offenders from faith traditions other than Christianity who are now returning to the community. Boards should be encouraged to consider how they can reach out to these offenders through Board membership or a referral network that includes minority religious groups.

Although some Boards were comprised of members from diverse professions, there did not seem to be an intentional strategy, except in a few cases, of recruiting Board members based on employment, e.g. Police officers, Parole officers, members of the clergy, etc. A more intentional strategy might result in a greater “buy in” on the part of the community.

This raises the issue of Board recruitment. Many Boards reflected on how difficult it is to recruit new members. While this may be a societal trend, it was noted that not everyone, or even most people, would find this ministry attractive. One Board member said, “My friends and neighbours just don’t understand why I would give so much time to criminals!”

In terms of governance issues, most of the Boards meet monthly or every six weeks. All Board members reported that they receive an agenda. Some stated that they would like to receive it ahead of time in order to adequately prepare for the meetings, but others stated that it was regular practice to receive the agenda well in advance of the meetings. In all cases the agenda was developed by the chairperson in consultation with the community chaplain. Only one Board member said that minutes were not forwarded to him after the meeting. All of the other members said that this was the common practice.

A constitution provides a guide for the values, principles, operation and priorities. For newcomers and stakeholders it is the document that defines the Board and the way it conducts its business. Thirty percent (30%) of the Board members interviewed stated that their Board did not have a constitution, while seventy percent (70%) stated that it did.

An annual report is a great way of communicating the community Board’s ministry to the broader community. An annual meeting provides a venue for volunteers and stakeholders to gather together to celebrate the ministry of community chaplaincy. In most cases an annual report is published by the Board and presented at an annual meeting; even so, nearly thirty percent (30%) of the respondents stated that this was not the practice.

Almost all of the Board members said that they felt free to express their opinion at meetings. However, roughly thirty percent (30%) of the respondents expressed concern about the lack of attendance of some members at the regular Board meetings.

Regarding the length of service for members, some Boards identified a specific period of time - e.g. two or three years – for which the Board members are permitted to serve. Some constitutions specify the number of terms that Board members are allowed to serve. However, even the Boards that do specify this admitted that, due to difficulties in recruiting members, they did not follow the requirement.

In summary, many Boards demonstrate a strong ability to govern themselves. Still, about forty percent of respondents said that they were not satisfied with the effectiveness of their Board. When the Board members were asked if they had any concerns, the following responses were offered:

- Board Orientation - One member said, “I didn’t receive an orientation to the Board when I joined and I needed one.”
- Expanded membership - Many said that there was a need to have more members on the Board.
- Board composition - Some were stated that their Boards needed a broader representation from different sectors of the community, e.g. First Nations, other faith communities, more professional people.
- Lack of time - One member expressed it this way, “Many on the Board have full-time jobs with substantial commitments. This sometimes impedes the energy/time available for Board work.”
- Recruitment - This issue relates to the concern about “expanded membership.” Some Board members stated that it is extremely difficult to recruit community members to get involved in this type of ministry.
- Property, finance, and public relations – Some respondents that these areas are not receiving enough attention.
- Role/reporting confusion - One Board member stated that the community chaplain reports to too many people (e.g. Board, faith community, CSC) and this leads to role confusion and frustration.
- Training - Some members said that their Board needed training in how to conduct Board meetings.
- Information about Prison issues and needs should receive more “agenda priority.”
- Attendance - In some cases there was a concern about absenteeism in Board meetings.
- Lack of funding for the community chaplaincy overall.
- Conducting of meetings - One Board member stated that the meetings needed to be shorter and more focused.

Nearly all of the members were satisfied with the way the Board manages the budget. When the community chaplains were asked to state their opinion on the fiscal management, all but one concurred that their Boards were doing a good job in this area. Many stated that it would be helpful to acquire more funding for the ministry.

Finding 4 Relationship to the Community Chaplain

A critical component of an effective Community Chaplaincy Board is the relationship between the Board and the community chaplain.

1. The Relationship between Community Chaplain and Board

Both the Board members and the community chaplains agreed that the community chaplains attending Board meetings on a regular basis. When Board members were asked to describe the relationship between their Board and the community chaplain, they did so in the following manner:

- The relationship is excellent, positive, and good. Almost all of the responses described a good working relationship between the two parties.
- Mutual support and encouragement - One Board member said, “There is mutuality, sometimes initiatives come from the chaplain and sometimes they come from the Board.”
- We are a team. A Board member described it this way: “We are a team and the chaplain is a key player. But we are all part of the team and see the powerful part we play together.”
- The relationship depends on the chaplain and Board composition. Some Boards spoke of a history of strained relationships between the chaplain and the Board. However, none spoke of such a relationship existing now.
- One member described the situation this way: “Communication is open and relaxed, appreciation is expressed, and practical problems are met quickly and efficiently.”

When the Board members were asked to give an opinion about how this relationship could be strengthened, the following responses were offered:

- Unsure.
- No improvement necessary - Many Board members stated that they could not think of a way of improving the relationship at this time.
- More contact - One member said, “Board members need to spend more time at the community chaplaincy office outside of Board meetings.”
- Less administrative work in order to free the chaplain up for chaplaincy work.
- More remuneration for the chaplain.
- More Board member involvement in the “hands on” work of the ministry.
- Greater clarity about the nature of the relationship between the chaplain and the Board.

When the community chaplains were asked the same question, i.e. How can the relationship be improved, their responses included:

- more frequent communication;
- better attendance at Board meetings on the part of the members;
- changing the Board meeting day;

- less “micro managing” of the community chaplain;
- developing a team approach with more clearly defined roles;
- through prayer and more fellowship.

All the community chaplains described the relationship between them and their Boards as being in the “good” to “excellent” range.

2. Accountability

In a general way the community chaplain is accountable to the Board for fulfilling of the “statement of work”. However, in a more specific way the community chaplain is accountable to his or her denominational authority and the Parole District. Regarding the issue of how the community chaplain is accountable to the Board, Board members listed the following mechanisms:

- monthly written and oral reports - One Board member described it like this, “He is on the spot at every Board meeting to answer for everything he’s up to and wants to get up to. It’s his obvious desire to be accountable that counts most, though.”
- time sheets accounting for hours of service delivery
- use of money through detailed expense reports
- establishment of a relationship of trust
- consultation between meetings
- “action items” at Board meetings
- “The community chaplain is always available.”

The community chaplains were also asked how they made themselves accountable to their Boards. Most of the responses matched the expectations of the Board members (noted above) and included the following:

- fulfilling the terms of the contract with the Board
- reporting monthly and annually through written and oral reports
- keeping the Board informed
- satisfying the Board’s mandate
- being honest, ethical, reliable, and transparent in all things
- reporting all financial activities
- participating in agenda development
- meeting with the chairperson as well as subcommittees
- “By being aware of who I am seeing.”

3. Communication

One of the most important aspects of the relationship between a community chaplain and the Board is regular communication. The site evaluation team observed that regular dialogue between chaplains and Boards promoted awareness and opportunities for mutual feedback. Both Board members and community chaplains were asked to discuss the issue of

communication. When asked how the chaplain communicates with the Board, Board members noted the following:

- written monthly reports
- regular verbal reports
- periodic emails
- one-to-one communication with chairperson and other Board members
- frequent telephone calls
- a one-page summary of monthly activities
- the monthly indicator report
- storytelling
- personal visits
- weekly breakfast meetings where we reflect on the past week and plan for the upcoming week
- newsletters

Most Board members were very satisfied with the level of communication between the Board and the community chaplain. However, some offered the following suggestions about how communication could be improved:

- more e-mailing between meetings
- a newsletter
- better use of sub-committees
- a written report for the Board to be presented at the monthly meetings

When the community chaplains were asked about the level of communication between themselves and their Boards, most described it as excellent. They stated that they communicate with their Boards in the following way:

- monthly reports in writing
- informal conversations, telephone calls
- e-mails
- newsletters and annual reports
- weekly visits
- verbal reports
- daily reports to chairperson during “crisis intervention”

Again, most of the community chaplains were satisfied with the level of communication, but some offered the following suggestions for improvement:

- more one-to-one interaction
- communication through “hands on” involvement of Board members
- an annual retreat
- more frequent evaluation

- more time with the chairperson
- regular newsletters

4. Impact

It is important to preface this section by addressing the issue of “impact.”

As noted earlier, the goal of this report is not only to state what is being done, e.g. activities, reports, statement of work, but to report on the impact or effect Community Ministry Boards are having throughout the country. This report seeks to state and explore the effect of the various activities in which the Boards engage. The questionnaires and interviews used to obtain the information report not only the data - although they do that - but also ask what the impact of these findings is and how this impact can be strengthened. As the body that directs community chaplaincy and holds the contract of the community chaplain, the impact of the Board on the community chaplain and of its oversight of community chaplaincy is being studied. As well, this report explores how the Boards’ impact in these areas could be improved.

The impact of the community ministry itself will be discussed in the third stage of the community engagement phase of the Chaplaincy Impact Project. This report attempts to describe and assess the impact of the Board’s work, not the actual ministry it seeks to direct.

Given the qualitative nature of this research, the Project Officer has made judgments and offered opinions based on his assessments of the questionnaires, interviews, and documents. To a certain extent, the report includes a description of his engagement in the process.

5. Impact of Community Chaplains on the Boards

The Board members interviewed rated their community chaplain in the ‘good’ to ‘excellent’ range in terms of their impact on their Community Chaplaincy Board. When asked if there were any suggestions for improving the impact of the community chaplains in relation to their Boards, the following responses were offered:

- Several Board members felt that there was no need to increase the impact. One Board member said, “He has to walk on water to do better. Our community chaplain has done a tremendous job.”
- Others suggested more detailed reports and more communication between meetings.
- Some would like to see a regular newsletter.
- Some felt the impact could be improved through the provision of administrative support for the community chaplain.
- Some advocated for self-care on the part of the community chaplain. One Board member echoed the feelings of others: “In most cases the community chaplain should slow down and listen to the Board’s advice about the need to take care of himself more.”

6. Impact of the Board on Community Chaplains

The community chaplains were also asked to consider the issue of the impact of their Board and its members. Only half of the respondents placed the impact in the 'good' to 'excellent' range. When asked to suggest ways the impact of Board members might be strengthened, the community chaplains suggested the following:

- increased size and composition of the Board
- more "hands on" volunteering
- better understanding of the role and purpose of a Board member
- the development of a mission statement and goals for the ministry
- better definition of the boundaries between daily management and Board functions
- more involvement in structuring the ministry
- greater ownership of the ministry
- clarification of the distinction between a Board and an advisory committee
- more committee involvement
- recruitment of younger members
- involvement by more members from the business community
- greater clarity of the roles for Board members
- recruitment of Board members to fulfill specific roles, e.g. treasurer, fundraiser, policy person, personnel, etc.

Although most community chaplains were satisfied with their Boards' ability to give direction to the Community Chaplaincy Ministry, some were not. The following is a summary of community chaplains' concerns about their Board:

- Several stated that they would like to see more involvement on the part of their Board members.
- Other community chaplains felt that their Board members do not know the CSC and this was creating difficulties.
- Some expressed a desire to see the Regional Chaplain visit the Board more often than he presently does.
- One community chaplain felt that there were too many on his Board that worked directly for the CSC.
- One community chaplain expressed concern that the neighbouring CSC institutional chaplains did not acknowledge their community chaplaincy.

7. Relationship to the CSC

For most Boards the key relationship with the CSC revolved around the Regional Chaplain. Board members and community chaplains were asked how often the Regional Chaplain visits their Board. The responses varied on a continuum from "the Regional Chaplain never visits" to "the Regional Chaplain attends our Board meetings on a monthly basis." However, the most frequent response was that the Regional Chaplain attends once a year. When asked

to state any concerns they had about the relationship between their Board and the CSC, Board members offered the following comments:

- No concerns about the relationship (Several interviewees gave this response.)
- A trust relationship is starting to build with the new Regional Chaplain.
- Communication between the Board and the CSC has been in the ‘good’ to ‘excellent’ range. (Many respondents reported this.)
- The Board needs to work more closely with the CSC.
- “The relationship is fair but distant.”
- Funding seems to always be “at risk”.
- There needs to be a higher priority given to this work.
- There is a CSC representative at every Board meeting. This helps the Board understand the CSC's point of view.
- The Board has no relationship with the CSC. (A few respondents claimed this.)
- There should be more meetings between the Board and the CSC.
- “The relationship is inconsistent and sometimes tense.”
- One Board member stated that “it will take years to learn to trust the CSC again after the mid-contract budget cuts that we experienced.”

When the community chaplains were asked to comment on their relationship with the CSC, many stated that they had no concerns about the relationship between their Board and the CSC. Others offered the following:

- We need more involvement on the part of the CSC.
- The Regional Chaplain needs to spend more time with the Board.
- The Board needs to work more closely with Community Corrections and Parole.
- Institutional Chaplains are reluctant to recognize the ministry of community chaplaincy.
- We have an excellent relationship with the CSC.
- It has been difficult getting the CSC to recognize and accept us.
- Continued support by the CSC will help the Board devote its energy to the ministry of community chaplaincy instead of the anxiety of fundraising.

Finding 5 Ministry Issues

1. Pastoral Practice

The Board members were asked to comment on the role of the Board in the area of the pastoral practice of the chaplain. They responded in the following ways:

- Some responded that they do not know what their role is in this area.
- Some saw their role as supervisory and supportive.
- A number viewed the area of pastoral practice as being distinct and removed from the Board's responsibilities. One Board members said, "This is the chaplain's domain, discussion does happen though." Another cited the

relationship a parish pastor has with his/her Board, saying that “the pastor has his/her flock to whom he/she brings pastoral care; that's the pastor's work. The Board is about planning and policy....the macro issues.”

- Some reported having a “limited role”.
- Other claimed it was weak due to time pressures and lack of energy.
- One responded by saying that “board members should respond to offenders’ needs and issues in the context of their faith communities.
- “Listening and advice” were a stated role.
- Some say that the Board does not assume a pastoral role.
- The role was described as offering prayer support.

When the community chaplains were asked to state the role of their Board relating to pastoral practice they said,

- to provide advice and/or support;
- to challenge the community chaplain;
- to give direction and oversight;
- to ensure adherence to the strategic plan;
- not to micro-manage the community chaplain's work.

The Board members were asked to comment on the process for dealing with the clinical issues that come up in the chaplain’s pastoral interactions. The question was, “How are the clinical issues of the ministry dealt with?”

- The chaplain has individuals with whom he consults.
- On a Board level, time is offered to the community chaplain to share any of these issues while respecting confidentiality.
- Several Board members admitted that they did not know.
- The Board makes referrals (or ‘a referral’) to professionals in the Board’s confidence
- “We pray together.”
- The common issues are dealt with by the chaplain. The tougher ones are discussed with a smaller group of Board members.

2. Volunteers

As noted above, it is difficult to attract volunteers to this ministry. One Board member said that he does not discuss his involvement because the negative reaction is so strong.

When the Board members were asked to rate the impact of the volunteer ministry on a scale of one (no impact) to five (maximum impact), all gave it a three or higher. Two thirds scored the volunteer ministry as having an impact of four or five. Board members responded in the following way to the question, “How could the volunteer ministry have greater impact?”

- more volunteers/ more active volunteers
- additional staff to train, support and direct the volunteer work
- more effective community engagement to increase recognition of the importance of this ministry
- no need to improve
- greater access to federal institutions
- “So far” the volunteer ministry has had tremendous success. (A new community chaplaincy)
- through representation on “standing committees”
- more training
- more jobs for volunteers to do

When the issue of risk as it relates to volunteers was raised with Board members, several replied that they did not know. What follows are their responses to the question, “How is the Board assured that its volunteers and offenders are not placed at risk?”

- the Volunteer Manual
- reports from the community chaplain
- emergency response, if situation warrants
- having more than one person in a room with a client at all times
- supervision
- training, monitoring, and mentoring
- confidentiality policies
- no resolution to this question despite lots of discussion
- situations do not get out of control here
- risk assessments
- discussion about boundaries in the training program
- “Risk is part of life.”
- education, accountability, and communication
- liability insurance
- awareness of offender’s history
- strong “ground rules”

The CSC will not sign a contract with a Community Chaplaincy Board unless it provides a certificate of liability.

3. Families

When asked to rate the impact of the Board’s ministry to families, most members placed it between three and five (on a scale of one being no impact to five representing maximum impact). However, some members responded that their ministry was not working with families at this time. To the question, “How could there be greater impact with families of offenders and ex-offenders?” the following responses were provided:

- additional staff and funding to implement the “Waiting at the Gate” program
- more volunteers
- collaboration with community groups doing this work
- additional resources
- more financial resources needed to work with families effectively
- more family events, invite family members to social/training functions
- more services for families to attend

Other comments included:

- Most of the clientele have little contact with their families
- Families may not be the place we need to put our energy right now.
- An assessment needs to be done on where families fit into this ministry.
- This needs to be made a greater priority by our Board.

4. Concerns, Issues and Suggestions

At the end of the questionnaire the Board members and community chaplains identified concerns, issues, or suggestions that had not already been noted.

Board Members

- There is excellent denominational diversity on the Board.
- More secure and stable funding is needed. One Board member said, “We have the vision, we have the opportunity...but we don’t have the funds to fulfill the needs or realize our vision.”
- The Board is looking forward to a good relationship with the Regional Chaplain.
- Many spoke of the privilege of being on the Board and how much meaning they receive from this type of service.
- Concern was expressed about CSC’s continued financial support.
- Some members spoke of the Board’s need to rediscover its direction.
- Support is needed from existing Boards in the form of expertise and sharing of experience.
- Program expansion is necessary.
- More retreats, workshops, and training are required.
- One Board member made these encouraging remarks: “Being totally new to the whole scene of re-integrating offenders, I am amazed at the dedication and skills of the chaplain and the organizations involved. It’s such a worthwhile project, serving people being lifted out of hopeless situations and given something to live for!”

Community Chaplains

- Many community chaplains felt very positive about their Boards.
- Some felt more time needed to give to Board development.

- Some expressed worries about the individual agendas of Board members taking over the group.
- Renewal of the existing membership is needed if the Board is going to be effective.
- New avenues of financial support are required.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Regional Chaplains meet with Community Ministry Board in their region to review and implement the suggestions noted below, where appropriate.

8. Suggestions for Strengthening the Impact of Community Boards

The following is a list of suggestions for strengthening Community Ministry Boards based on the key findings in questionnaire responses and site observations. The suggestions seek to respond to the question, “How can the impact of community chaplaincy Board ministry be strengthened?”

For the most part the suggestions arose out of the interaction with community Board members and community chaplains in the five regions of Canada. Some of them relate to how CSC Chaplaincy and the CSC generally might respond more effectively to the Boards. Since the Boards are community-based, autonomous groups, CSC offers the suggestions for their consideration as to whether they might improve their impact.

Mission

(1) A well-defined and understood mission can lay the foundation for effective ministry. A mission statement allows the Board to communicate its reason for existence to its members and the community at large. A clearly articulated mission can inspire new members to join a Board and encourage funders to respond in positive ways. Many Board members stated that the reason they joined their Board was related to the challenge of its mission. One Board member stated: “I was attracted to this ministry, despite protests from friends and family, because I believed in its mission. I still do. We are making our community a safer place!”

Although most Board members and community chaplains stated that their Boards possessed a mission statement, in most cases it did not seem to be a vital component in directing and shaping their ministry. If the Board does not know why it exists it will likely have little impact.

While some Board members struggled to articulate the actual mission, others discussed the importance of moving through a process of re-forming and re-shaping their mission to suit the current context. Some reflected on a time when their Board had a strong sense of why it existed, but time and circumstances had led it to stray away from its mission. Many said that it was now time for the Board to rearticulate its mission to suit today’s challenges in their

communities. The community Boards that have recently undertaken such a process appear to have new vision and energy for their Board and its community ministry.

- It is suggested that the community Boards ensure that they possess a strong, clearly articulated mission statement and find effective ways of communicating it to their membership, their constituency, and their stakeholders.

(2) Unless the mission is accompanied by an intentional process of concrete planning it will likely not be realized. The impact of failing to plan will be an ineffective Board lacking clear direction.

Many respondents to the questionnaire could state their mission in a general way. However, in most cases it was difficult to find any written documentation that described the strategic ways the Boards were planning to realize their mission. The Boards that have engaged in strategic planning were able to celebrate achieving their goals, while those who did not have plans were unable to clearly discuss their mission.

- It is suggested that the community Boards engage in a strategic planning process to create the goals, objectives and action plans to realize their mission.

(3) Another issue relates to monitoring and accountability. If a mission document is to be effective, plans need to be made to monitor how effectively the Board is realizing its mission. Boards can have excellent written plans but unless there is a process to evaluate “follow through” the plans will be rendered ineffective.

The monitoring process could occur in many ways. The regular Board meeting itself could provide a form for evaluating if the Board is implementing its plans. A few Boards have a yearly retreat/planning session for review, visioning, and planning. This has proven to be extremely effective. Some Boards invite the Regional Chaplain to be part of this process.

- It is suggested that community Boards plan an annual event to address vision and planning. In addition it is recommended that Boards have a process in place to evaluate their progress.

Governance

(4) Although the questionnaires indicated that a number of Boards had received new members in the last two years, over forty percent (40%) had served on their Board between four to fifteen consecutive years. This could be an impediment to recruitment.

Some members stated that they felt “trapped” because so few people from the community want to serve on a Board that assists offenders in the community. It is important to value service that has been given by Board members. In most cases this service has been a great sacrifice to personal and family interests in order to further the cause of offender reintegration.

While many people today, especially younger people, might not be interested in serving on a Board for several years, they might be willing to give one, two or three years to serve on a Community Chaplaincy Board. While this presents an ongoing challenge, new Board members often bring a fresh perspective and energy to a Board. They often serve as a catalyst for change.

A service strategy that is “time limited” might provide some relief for those Board members wanting to resign as well as encourage new members to consider becoming involved for a short period of time.

- It is suggested that each Board discuss and evaluate the issue of the length of term and how many terms a Board member is permitted to serve. This should be reviewed through the lens of member “burnout” and member recruitment.

(5) The evaluation revealed that there were two perspectives on Board member participation. One viewed Board members as needing to be at ‘arm’s length’ from the ministry with the members having a supervisory, management function. The other viewed the Board members as needing to participate in the community chaplaincy in order to gain full understanding of the issues. The questionnaires revealed that there was some confusion over the expectations and obligations of Board members as they relate to participation in the work of community chaplaincy.

This study does not have the findings to support which strategy creates a more effective Board. The ‘arm’s length’ strategy affords objectivity on the part of the Board members and gives the Board an objective ‘distance’ from the ministry it seeks to direct. As the contract holder the Board is then able to process contract and personnel issues in a more detached manner. The downside of this approach is that the Board members who do not participate in the ministry often lack awareness of the issues related to the ministry it is directing.

On the other hand, Boards who subscribe to a hands-on policy for their members gain firsthand knowledge and experience related to offender reintegration. Because they participate, they can speak to the issues from their own experience. The challenge though, from this perspective, is remaining objective when it comes to Board policy and decision making. Members’ involvement could impact negatively on their ability to govern.

What the interviews identified was the lack of clarity relating to what the policy or expectation was. Some respondents felt guilty because the expectation of involvement was there and they did not have the time to meet it.

- It is suggested that each Board develop guidelines concerning Board member participation in the hands-on work of community chaplaincy.

(6) A Board constitution establishes the blueprint for the Community Ministry Board. Without a constitution the Board will likely flounder in terms of organization, planning, and governance.

A fairly high percentage of Board members were not sure if their Board possessed a constitution. Some Boards did not have a constitution while others possessed one without their members being aware of it.

- It is suggested that each Board review its documents to ensure that it possesses a constitution and that all members and new members are familiar with this document.

(7) An annual report and meeting afford a tremendous opportunity to engage the community with whom a Board is partnering and serving. They also have an impact on Board member recruitment. Prospective members can catch the vision of the Board through its report of what it has accomplished during the past year.

- It is suggested that each Board produce an annual report in order to effectively communicate the ministry of community chaplaincy to the greater community.

(8) A number of respondents were concerned about inconsistent attendance at Board meetings. This situation has a negative impact on the morale and effectiveness of the Board. When asked how the Board could become more effective the issue of Board member absenteeism was mentioned frequently.

- It is suggested that each Board institute guidelines for member attendance at Board meetings.

(9) A Community Chaplaincy Board is complex with its own rules, language and culture. To the newcomer this can be overwhelming, especially considering that sixty percent of those interviewed had only served on their Board for two years or less.

An effective orientation program could facilitate the new Board members' feeling of confidence in his/her role, increase member retention as well as promote Board member recruitment if presented to the prospective Board member. An orientation also provides an opportunity to draw on the resources of the Board's partners, including the CSC, thereby promoting awareness, and affords an opportunity for strengthening relationships with stakeholders.

Some Board members stated that they needed an orientation to the Board upon becoming a member.

- It is suggested that each Board implement an orientation process for all new Board members in order to ensure informed participation. The orientation process should be two-fold: orientation to the ministry of community chaplaincy and orientation to the CSC.

(10) The relationship between the community chaplain and the Board can have an impact on the direction of the Board. When there is dissatisfaction on the part of the community chaplain or the Board concerning the effectiveness of one or both parties, there is cause for concern. The impact of community chaplains' dissatisfaction with their Boards' ability to

give direction is enormous; it could lead to a deteriorating relationship between the two parties and be the cause of serious conflict.

When community chaplains were asked to assess the impact of their Board, half placed the impact in the 'good' to 'excellent' range. Still, thirty percent (30%) of the community chaplains were not satisfied with their Boards' ability to give direction to the Community Chaplaincy Ministry.

- It is suggested that, in collaboration with the Regional Chaplain, each Board consider how to strengthen the impact of the Board in relation to the work of community chaplaincy as outlined in the Appendices of this report.

Relationship to the Community Chaplain

(11) It is recognized that most respondents described the relationship between the Board and the community chaplain as 'good' to 'excellent'. However, good relationships must be maintained through ongoing attention. The impact of a poor relationship between the two was often mentioned by Board members when they were reviewing the history of the Board/chaplain. Those who had experienced this were anxious to maintain a healthy relationship between Board and chaplain.

Despite the comments in Recommendation 10, it seems that most community chaplains and their Boards have a very good relationship. Still, there are issues that need to be addressed.

- It is suggested that each Board review the section in the text and Appendix on the relationship between the Board and the community chaplain, asking whether the concerns noted in the appendix apply to their relationship and taking steps to improve the relationship where necessary.

(12) The relationship between the chaplain and the Board chairperson is critical. Every effort should be made on the part of both parties to foster good communication and a strong relationship. Most Board members and community chaplains reported that communication between them was good. Yet communication is an ongoing task and commitment.

Communication is often a contributing factor to a poor relationship. Attendance at monthly meetings, e-mail updates between meetings, telephone conversations and private meetings with Board members when necessary all strengthen communication and the relationship between chaplain and the Board.

- It is suggested that the Board and the community chaplain review the suggestions offered in the Appendix on improving communication. The Board and the community chaplain are urged to evaluate the quality of communication with one another.

Relationship with the CSC

(13) The major issue for the Boards regarding their relationship with the CSC relates to funding. Some of the Boards have experienced mid-contract funding cuts, which has created a major breach of trust. As in any relationship, when there has been a loss of trust, it takes time to heal.

For the most part Community Chaplaincy Boards operate on very small budget. Even a fifteen percent cut has an immediate impact on direct service. The Boards struggle with what a contract means and whether cuts will happen again. Some Boards wondered why the funding cuts were not spread throughout institutional as well as community chaplaincy. This would have made the shortfall less severe.

Due to the cuts some Boards are now in the process of exploring other funding options beyond the CSC. Some have already cultivated non-CSC funding sources, which is a positive development.

- It is suggested that Regional and National Chaplaincy do everything possible to ensure that once contracts have been established for a fiscal year they are respected. It is also suggested that the CSC, IFC and the faith communities develop a dispute mechanism to settle contractor grievances that arise in relation to their contractual agreement with the CSC.

(14) Because the Regional Chaplains are the CSC contact person for most Boards, they have a vital role with the Community Ministry Boards and it is essential that regular contact be maintained. The Regional Chaplains present, review and administers the contract and offers the perspective of the CSC on issues to the Board. They also state and interpret the community ministry needs to the CSC. It is, therefore, essential that the Regional Chaplain make every effort to be an ongoing presence with the Community Boards. and to offer time evenly throughout the Region.

The questionnaires indicated that there is a great deal of disparity in terms of Board contact on the part of Regional Chaplains. Some Boards stated that the only time they saw the Regional Chaplain was when there was “bad news”.

- It is suggested that the Regional Chaplains ensure regular, appropriate contact with the Community Ministry Boards in their region. It is recommended that they attend at least one Board meeting per year of each community chaplaincy in their region.

(15) Strong linkage with CSC institutions, especially minimum security institutions and Parole Offices, will ensure a continuum of care and support. However, some CSC institutions and offices have little or no awareness that there is a Community Chaplaincy Board in their community.

Some interviewees suggested that their Board needs to have greater contact with the local community Parole Offices. This would enhance the impact of the community chaplaincy.

- It is suggested that the Boards invite a representative from the local Parole Office to attend their meetings on a regular basis - at least once a quarter - for the purpose of establishing a stronger relationship and discussing common issues and concerns.

(16) A notification process is an important factor in the reintegration process. By putting a notification system in place with the CSC, the Board, through the community chaplain, will have the potential to have a greater impact on offender reintegration.

Not many Boards indicated that they were receiving parole and release information that could assist them in facilitating contact with ex-offenders and those serving time in the community. At present this process appears to be haphazard, for the most part.

- It is suggested that each Board work with the local institution(s) and Parole Office to build a more intentional process that can facilitate contact with offenders entering their community.

Ministry Issues

(17) There appear to be two perspectives on the issue of Board involvement in the clinical issues of the community chaplaincy's pastoral ministry. One is a 'hands off' stance on the Boards' part, which views the chaplains as responsible for pastoral care; they should be left alone to do their pastoral work. The other perspective sees the Boards as a support or 'listening ear' for the chaplains and the issues they are addressing in one-to-one pastoral ministry.

- It is suggested that the Board and the community chaplain ensure that an effective process is in place to deal with the clinical issues of the work.

(18) With one exception, the recruitment of volunteers seems to be a universal challenge for the Community Chaplaincy Boards interviewed. Perhaps Boards can learn from each other on this issue.

- It is suggested that Board members and community chaplains engage in a discussion with each other on the recruitment of volunteers. As well, it is recommended that the Regional Chaplains provide more consultation on the issue of volunteer recruitment to Community Chaplaincy Boards.

(19) The issue of risk was discussed in this evaluative process. It appears that some Boards have not considered the risks under which their volunteers, community chaplains, and Board members are placed in this ministry. In some cases it does not appear that the issue of liability insurance has been addressed.

- It is suggested that all Boards review how they assess and manage risk, making necessary adjustments such as in-service education, training, and accountability mechanisms to manage risk more effectively. As well, all Boards must ensure that they have liability insurance in place and understand that they are legally responsible for the ministry.

Other Issues

(20) Some Board members discussed their need for resource materials relating to Community Ministry Boards. This evaluative process has accumulated many resources from the community chaplaincies it has visited. Documents such as newsletters, pamphlets, mission documents, constitutions, strategic planning documents, handbooks, volunteer training guides have been gathered from the sites. These should be made available to the Boards across the country.

- It is suggested that NHQ Chaplaincy compile an Information Resource Kit for Community Boards using the above as resource material for the use of all Chaplaincy Boards.

(21) Many Board members expressed the need for training in the area of Community Ministry Boards.

- It is suggested that each Regional Chaplain organize a regional training event for Board members. This could be planned as a time for education, fellowship, recognition, and support for Community Board members and community chaplains in coordination with NHQ.

APPENDIX II. THE INTERFAITH COMMITTEE

1. Background

The third stage of the Community Engagement Report involves the Interfaith Committee, a vital expression of community engagement involving the participation of the faith communities of Canada.

A qualitative tool was developed to ask the IFC members themselves questions of impact and how the impact of the IFC might be strengthened. The questionnaire responses along with an analysis of the IFC constitution and bylaws form the basis of what follows. It is offered to the IFC executive for their consideration and further action.

The history of the IFC has been well documented in *A Living Tradition: Penitentiary Chaplaincy*⁷. While the whole story does not need repeating here, its author, Tom James, notes that the IFC was formed in 1968 with the following stated purposes:

The Committee agreed to select and recommend for appointment chaplains to federal penitentiaries; accept some responsibility to assist chaplains to return to service in their churches or elsewhere whenever necessary; supervise and train (at a future date); and liaise with the churches in all aspects of chaplaincy in the penitentiaries.

It is also agreed that the participating churches be asked to recognize the committee as [a] channel for selection, recommendation for appointment and rotation out of service of chaplain personnel in federal penitentiaries; to agree to use this channel and not to make direct nominations to the government; and to name members to the committee.⁸

Since 1968 the Interfaith Committee has evolved and changed in response to new challenges. According to its Constitution (1996) the functions of the IFC are implemented through the following roles:

- ❖ advisory
- ❖ supporting
- ❖ recruitment and screening
- ❖ selection
- ❖ liaison
- ❖ reporting

⁷ James, J.T.L., *A Living Tradition*, Correctional Service of Canada (Chaplaincy Division), Ottawa, 1990.

⁸ *idem.*, p. 119.

2. Summary of Questionnaire Responses

What follows is a summary of the responses received from IFC members to the questionnaires they completed. A complete picture of the responses is available upon request.

1. IFC Members

IFC members belong to several faith communities, most of which are Christian. These denominations, which are national in scope with regional and local representation, select the members to represent their denominational/faith body on the IFC.

The reasons the IFC members give for agreeing to serve on the IFC include their own personal interest and expertise in the area of criminal justice and prison chaplaincy and/or their prior experience with corrections or prison chaplaincy. Others view their involvement as an opportunity to learn more about the criminal justice system and prison chaplaincy issues.

2. Member Relationships with Their Faith Communities

IFC Members vis-à-vis Their Faith Community

Most IFC members provide written reports to their faith communities on at least an annual basis. These reports provide the faith communities with an update on IFC issues and concerns. Some make verbal presentations at gatherings of their communities, while others have one-to-one meetings with their leaders.

Some members indicated that they forward minutes of the IFC meetings to the national or regional offices of their faith communities. Some utilize the electronic medium, especially email, to keep their denominations updated.

However, the questionnaire responses indicated that there is room for improvement in the area of communication. Nearly half the respondents put the frequency of their communication with their faith community in the 'never' or 'sometimes' category.

Faith Communities vis-à-vis the IFC Members

Although a few members reported that the communication flow between them and their faith community was good, most rated it as an area of concern. Three quarters of the respondents stated that the frequency of communication was either 'never' or 'sometimes'. Only one quarter put it in the 'regularly' or 'often' range. When asked to rate the level of interest that their faith community has in the work of the IFC, half the respondents put it in the 'poor' category.

One of the IFC's goals is to reflect the feedback, opinions, and critiques of Canada's faith communities to the CSC. For this to happen, the faith communities must first provide input

to their representatives on the IFC. Regular feedback from the faith communities would strengthen the impact of this important voice.

Strengthening the Relationship between IFC Members and Their Faith Communities

The respondents had several suggestions for enhancing the relationship between the IFC members and their faith communities. These included:

- having regular meetings with the denominational leadership;
- forwarding IFC minutes and articles; and
- planning local events with the faith community to profile criminal justice issues.

One respondent suggested that each faith community appoint a contact person to respond to prison chaplaincy issues on behalf of the leadership, a practice already in place in some of the denominations. These, and other suggestions, could enhance the communication and relationship between the IFC members and their faith communities.

3. The Interfaith Committee

The Purpose of the IFC

The questionnaire respondents had a strong sense of the IFC's purpose. Some viewed its purpose as being to advise the Director General of Chaplaincy, the CSC, and the faith communities of Canada on prison chaplaincy and criminal justice issues. One respondent used the metaphor of the watchdog, stating that the IFC was the watchdog for the religious rights and freedoms of prisoners. Other members saw the IFC's purpose as ensuring the quality of religious/spiritual care for prisoners and their families. Some pointed to the important role the IFC plays in selecting and evaluating chaplains and the services they provide.

Strategies to Achieve its Mission

While some members found it difficult to identify the strategies adopted by the IFC to achieve its purposes, others had no difficulty. Many view the promotion of dialogue between the IFC, which represents the diverse faith communities of Canada, and chaplains, CSC decision-makers, NHQ Chaplaincy and partners in ministry as being an important strategy in achieving its mission. Some pointed to the IFC meetings as an important forum for the promotion of dialogue between the members of the faith communities themselves. Complying with the *Memorandum of Understanding* was cited as another way of fulfilling the IFC's purposes. A great deal of emphasis was placed on the active participation of IFC members in the meetings, with following through on agreed actions as being another way it achieves its mission. One respondent saw the IFC as fulfilling the function of 'catalyst' in relation to the CSC, Chaplaincy, the criminal justice system, the faith communities, and inmates.

Based on the lack of response on the part of some of the respondents, it appears that there is a need for the IFC to be more intentional in defining ways to achieve its mission. The

IFC may find it helpful to engage as a group in a strategic planning exercise to express its mission, while also making itself accountable in specific ways for achieving its mission.

Identifying Impact

Members pointed to several ways in which the IFC makes a difference. The very existence of a multifaith body committed to the spiritual and religious care and concerns of Canadian prisoners was viewed by IFC members as having an impact not only on the criminal justice system but also on the Canadian faith community and the society at large. The knowledge, experience and skills of the IFC members provide a community-based resource for feedback and advice to the CSC and Chaplaincy. As well, the networks represented by each member provide portals for assisting the CSC in its mission.

The IFC has a direct impact on the quality of chaplaincy through its involvement in the recruiting, selection and evaluation of institutional and community chaplains. It also impacts the criminal justice system by introducing and supporting innovative initiatives such as restorative justice.

Some members could not identify the impact of the IFC and others speculated that its impact is sometimes weakened by the lack of follow through on its recommendations.

Finally, the IFC Executive was commended by some for its dedication and effectiveness.

Identifying Weaknesses

All groups have weaknesses as well as strengths. Some members felt that one of the IFC's weaknesses lies in the need for better representation of all faith groups on the IFC. Other members observed the need to improve the attendance of members at meetings.

Some questionnaire respondents felt that they needed better preparation for membership on the IFC and hoped that an orientation process could be initiated. They suggested that this process would afford the IFC the opportunity to explain its expectations of its member including roles, obligations, and purpose.

Several respondents identified a perceived lack of adequate funding as a weakness.

As noted above, some have concerns when it comes to the lack of clarity about the purpose of the IFC and a lack of strategic planning to express its purpose and mission.

Finally, some respondents commented on the need to improve the information linkages between the IFC and the faith communities.

Faith Community Representation

There were three aspects to this issue according to the questionnaire respondents. Some believe that there needs to be more representation of non-Christian faith communities on the IFC. Others believe that the representation of the faith communities is adequate but that the attendance of non-Christian faith members needs improvement. Finally, some express

the viewpoint that the over-representation of Christian groups reflects the reality of the offender demographic and should be maintained.

IFC Members' Goals

The questionnaire respondents described various goals that they pursue as members of the IFC. Some of these goals include ensuring that CSC provides appropriate and adequate religious accommodation, working to promote restorative justice, and gaining personal knowledge of the correctional justice system in Canada.

A number of members see their goal as supporting the chaplains who do the hands-on work. For the respondents this involves listening to the chaplains and their issues and then ensuring that their voice is heard on the IFC. Also, communicating IFC issues to the chaplains is important for some of the members.

Other IFC members consider it important to convey information on Chaplaincy and criminal justice issues to their faith community. As well, they see bringing the issues and concerns of their communities of faith to the IFC and the CSC as an essential goal.

Improving the Impact of the IFC

Respondents made many suggestions regarding how the IFC could have a greater impact, including addressing member absenteeism from meetings, improving communication with all levels of the CSC and the faith communities, emphasizing local issues through regional meetings, developing action and accountability plans, as well as advocating for greater financial support for the IFC and becoming better known by chaplains and faith communities.

4. Engaging Chaplaincy

IFC Members' Role with Chaplains

Most members view their role with chaplains as supporting them and their work. According to the respondents, this support includes listening to and encouraging chaplains. As well, they mentioned providing moral support for a difficult ministry as one of their roles. Some suggested regular meetings between chaplains and local IFC members as a way to stay in touch with chaplains and their issues. In addition, a few respondents viewed their role as that of an advocate for chaplains, or 'to be their voice'.

Being connected with the chaplains seems important to many IFC members; however, in reality, most reported that they do not meet with chaplains on a regular basis.

IFC Members' Participation in Chaplaincy Reviews

One of the ways the IFC engages Chaplaincy is through participating in chaplains' selection and reviews and through site visitations. Two thirds of the respondents reported that they had participated in one of these activities within the last two to five years, while one third stated they had done so within the past year. Almost all the IFC members who filled out the

questionnaire stated that they would make themselves available to participate in this way, if asked.

The Role of the IFC with CSC Chaplaincy

When asked to discuss the role of the IFC vis-à-vis CSC Chaplaincy, the members stated that it was to collaborate with Chaplaincy in the selection, evaluation, formation, and support of chaplains. Some also saw the IFC's role as that of an advocate for Chaplaincy and its issues with the CSC and their faith communities.

Suggestions for Improving the Relationship between the IFC and CSC Chaplaincy

Some of the suggestions for strengthening the relationship between the IFC and CSC Chaplaincy included increasing the visibility of the IFC, improving communication and dialogue between the two and promoting an open, honest discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in their relationship. One respondent suggested that the visible presence of a CSC staff member at the IFC meetings would be helpful. Finally, developing a more realistic budget to meet the needs of the IFC could strengthen the relationship between the IFC and Chaplaincy, according to some of the respondents.

Concerns about the *Memorandum of Understanding*

As the IFC has engaged in a process of reviewing the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*, members were asked to outline their concerns about the current version.

Some members did not feel they knew enough about the *MOU* to comment on it, while others seem very confident that the *MOU* Review Subcommittee will address any issues and present them to the plenary session of the IFC.

One member expressed concern that Chaplaincy not be diminished and that chaplains not become 'coordinators' as opposed to 'chaplains'. Another hoped that Chaplaincy could adapt to new orientations like restorative justice as it moves forward.

Suggestions for Improving the *Memorandum of Understanding*

Again, most respondents felt that they did not know enough about the *MOU* to make any comments. One suggested that the language in the *MOU* be simplified and clarified somewhat. As well, one respondent made a plea that the consultation to revise the *MOU* be as broad as possible. Finally, one member believes that ratios between chaplains and inmates should be interpreted in light of the nature of each institution and the chaplaincy ministry required.

It appears that most members are looking to the Subcommittee to explore and present proposals for revisions to the *MOU*.

3. Key Findings

1. The IFC represents a rich human resource that reflects the gifts of Canada's diverse faith communities. Its members bring a wealth of experience in the areas of criminal justice, education, human services and theology, to name a few. They give their time freely to attend meetings, assist in the selection and evaluation of chaplains and bring correctional issues to the attention of their faith communities. Their commitment and dedication is noteworthy and should be applauded.
2. The makeup of the IFC more or less reflects the religious demographic of the incarcerated population, as per article VI(1) of the IFC's Constitution. Consequently the IFC membership is predominantly Christian. However, the major non-Christian religious communities also have representation on the IFC.
3. Although the composition of the IFC is faithful to its Constitution, half the members of the IFC respondents felt that there should be greater representation of non-Christian viewpoints at the IFC meetings.
4. One criterion for membership is that members belong to a national church group or faith community. However, the efficiency of IFC meetings may be impacted by the fact that one third of the attendees are non-voting members. This means they may speak to, but not vote on, the issues that being addressed. This situation arises because the Constitution provides for a representative from the Canadian Council of Churches, three chaplain representatives and the executive secretary to attend.
5. Some members are concerned about the absenteeism of other IFC members. Because the group only meets twice per year, they consider it essential that members attend meetings in order to contribute to the IFC agenda and make their viewpoint heard.
6. A number of members regularly report IFC concerns and issues to their faith communities. They use written reports, annual reports, emails and meetings of their faith communities to increase awareness about the IFC. However, nearly half the respondents stated that this happens only occasionally or never.
7. The impact of the IFC depends partially on good communication between the IFC member and his/her faith community. This communication should be two-way: relaying information and concerns to the faith communities, as noted above, and taking the concerns of the faith communities to the IFC. However, when asked about the frequency of communication from their faith community, only a quarter placed it in the 'regular' or 'often' category. Also in response to the question designed to gauge faith community interest in the work of the IFC, half the respondents rated it in the 'low' category.
8. Although some IFC members are grappling with the purpose of the IFC, it appears that most of those who responded to the questionnaire understand its purposes as identified in the IFC's Constitution. The stated purposes are: to be an advisor to the

- CSC and the faith communities; to support chaplains in their ministry; to be a resource for recruiting, screening and selecting chaplains; and to report regularly to the CSC and the faith communities. As well, most of the members have developed their own goals as IFC members.
9. One of the major purposes of the study is to understand the impact of the IFC. The IFC members have a strong understanding and appreciation of its impact and they feel that what they are doing makes a difference.
 10. The members also have opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the IFC. A clear articulation of these will enable the group to celebrate its strengths and develop a plan to address its weaknesses.
 11. Members expressed strong satisfaction with the way the IFC plans and operates its meetings. The one exception concerns the absence of an orientation process to prepare the members for their role. Although some members come to their positions with a background in criminal justice, others do not. An orientation process could help the new members to better understand the IFC's language, culture, organizational issues, expectations, etc.
 12. There is concern on the part of some francophone members about the lack of French spoken at the meetings. This negatively impacts membership recruitment from Quebec and leads to a degree of frustration on the part of the unilingual members who do not have a working facility with both languages.
 13. Many respondents feel that the IFC could have greater impact if it received more funding. Some feel that its impact is seriously impaired by its relatively small budget.
 14. The role of IFC members vis-à-vis individual chaplains was described as being very important. However, for most IFC members this role remains more formal in nature and is often played out in the context of selection or review and evaluation processes. IFC members expressed a desire to gather with Chaplaincy teams to provide more informal support and a 'listening ear'.
 15. Most of the IFC members surveyed have participated in the selection and review of chaplains or in site visits during the last five years. This is one of the functions of the IFC that represents an important resource for CSC Chaplaincy. All but one respondent expressed the desire to have more involvement in these types of activities.
 16. The membership is very positive about the current relationship between the IFC and CSC Chaplaincy. The relationship is seen as collaborative and productive. Yet all relationships can be improved and IFC members offered suggestions toward this end.
 17. The IFC members have a good understanding of the relationship between the IFC and the CSC. They recognize the important role they play vis-à-vis the CSC. As noted above, they also offer creative suggestions for strengthening the relationship.

18. The members expressed a number of concerns about the *Memorandum of Understanding*. They made several suggestions for improving it, but also expressed confidence in the Sub-committee currently engaged its review.
19. Some of the members expressed concern about the Chaplaincy Impact Project focusing on the IFC. They appear to need a more detailed explanation of the process as it applies to the IFC.
20. There is an appreciation of the excellent role that the Executive plays in overseeing the IFC's business. The membership values the role that the Executive plays in advancing the mission of the IFC.
21. Although members who filled out the questionnaires did not directly express concern about whether the current practice of meeting twice a year is the most effective way of realizing the IFC's mission, this question may be worthy of discussion. Some members suggested that regional meetings take place, while others stated that they would like to meet with chaplains on a regular basis. Still others felt that they needed to make a greater effort to engage the faith communities in their area. A large portion of the current budget is spent on the two meetings. If there were only one meeting per year, the monies currently used for the second meeting could be directed to initiatives such as those noted above. Another option is to retain meeting twice per year and seek increased funding for the other initiatives.

4 Recommendation

That the IFC Executive review the key findings and suggestions noted below, taking action where appropriate.

5. Suggestions

These suggestions to the IFC Executive emerge from the findings noted above.

1. That the IFC consider ways to ensure that the voice of the non-Christian faith communities is heard at IFC meetings.
2. That the IFC evaluate whether the current percentage of non-voting members constitutes a barrier to the effectiveness of the group.
3. That the IFC develop a plan to address member absenteeism. If an IFC member consistently misses meetings the Executive should review his/her membership.
4. That all IFC members develop a plan to more effectively communicate IFC issues and concerns to their faith communities. As well, each IFC member needs to

consider how he/she might stimulate more interest on the part of his/her faith community about IFC concerns.

5. That all IFC members consider ways that they are fulfilling the constitutional purposes of the IFC and develop their own strategy and action plan for promoting the needs of offenders and restorative justice in their faith communities and cities.
6. That the IFC Executive consider designating time at each meeting for the members to report on their activities in advancing criminal justice issues within their faith communities as well as bringing the concerns of their faith communities to the IFC meeting.
7. That the IFC review and celebrate its strengths as reported by its members and create time in its agenda to discuss, evaluate, and address the identified weaknesses.
8. That the IFC consider how it might develop and implement an orientation process for new members. This package might include a review of Constitution and Bylaws, the obligations of membership, an orientation to the CSC and CSC Chaplaincy, etc. Such an orientation could precede or follow the two plenary meetings in the first year of IFC membership.
9. That the IFC Executive consider how to create a more ‘user friendly’ atmosphere for members whose first language is French.
10. That the IFC continue to discuss the issue of funding with the CSC in order to determine whether the current funding level is adequate to fulfil its mission.
11. That each member consider how the IFC can more effectively support individual chaplains either through group meetings or one-to-one support, as this is one of their roles.
12. That CSC Chaplaincy continue to recognize the willingness of IFC members to participate in the selection and evaluation of chaplains, as well as in site visitations, requesting their involvement where necessary.
13. That CSC Chaplaincy consider the recommendations made by IFC members to strengthen the relationship between the IFC, the CSC and CSC Chaplaincy.
14. That the *MOU* Sub-committee review the suggestions made by IFC members concerning their work.
15. That the IFC Executive communicate to the IFC membership the role of the Chaplaincy Impact Project clarified, especially as it relates to the IFC.
16. That CSC commend the members of the IFC Executive for its dedication and hard work, which is rarely recognized. Especially noteworthy are the recent discussions with CSC leadership that are having a dramatic impact on Chaplaincy and the CSC.

APPENDIX THREE - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Community Chaplain** refers to a chaplain in the employ of a local community chaplaincy board to provide chaplaincy to parolees, parolee families and parole/halfway house staff. For the purpose of this report, the community chaplain in Toronto and Vancouver refers to the contracting agent of a faith community that has a contract with the CSC to deliver community chaplaincy.
- **Community Chaplaincy** refers to the work of a local organization including a community chaplaincy board, community chaplain, volunteers and the programs offered in the community.
- **Community Ministry Board is an advisory committee/board established in a community to support community chaplaincy's work.**
- **Impact** is used in this report to denote the effect that chaplaincy services are having on individuals. The impact may be evidenced by, but not limited to, spiritual growth, behavioural change, and increased ability to deal with life in the community. 'Impact' refers not only to a deeper understanding of one's religious/spiritual beliefs but also to the application of that understanding in life-giving ways.
- **Pastoral Care** is a healing ministry of the faith community that is based on a relationship between a chaplain/pastor (or pastoral care team) with counselling skills and a person or group who come together to engage in conversation and interaction. The relationship is a dynamic process of caring and exploration, usually with a definite structure and mutually contracted goals, and occurs within the tradition, beliefs, and resources of the faith community that surrounds and supports them. (adapted from *Pastoral Counselling across Cultures*, David Augsburg (1986) p. 15.)
- **Pastoral Plan** is a planning tool for pastoral ministry. It begins with the pastoral team considering the question, "Who are we?" To answer this question the team develops a mission statement, guiding principles and values. From the macro level it moves to strategic ways of actualizing the philosophical/theological values. It undertakes a needs assessment based on the pastoral context and then attempts to address the needs in a systematic way, utilizing the full resources of the pastoral team including chaplains, community clergy, and volunteers. An effective pastoral plan builds in accountability, flexibility, evaluation, and communication.
- **Qualitative Evaluation** "seeks to discover the meaning of a human experience and to communicate this understanding to the reader. It does this through narrative rather than through numbers, with the understanding that its narrative words evoke the human experience attached to them."⁹ Most qualitative research employs the face-to-face interview to make meaning by encouraging the researcher to engage the interviewee in

⁹ Vandecreek et al, *Research in Pastoral Care and Counselling* (1994).

the pursuit of a question. This type of research is especially suited to an evaluation of something as non-quantifiable as spirituality.

- **Visible Presence** is a term employed in the *Statement of Work for Chaplains*. It describes the qualitative dimension of the chaplain's presence, not merely the quantitative aspect. The latter can be determined by signing a worksheet that confirms number of hours delivered. However, the visible presence is something less concrete, referring to the theological concept of incarnating the divine in the ministry and pastoral services offered.