

# Exploring Leadership Styles for Chaplaincy

## Abraham

### The Visionary Chaplain

In the following section, we delve into the key characteristics of godly men as described in scriptures. These examples provide insights into five distinct leadership styles available to prison chaplains. While this is not an exhaustive analysis, it serves to guide future chaplains in understanding which leadership approach aligns best with their personality and gifts, and how God utilizes each style.

Abraham, often regarded as the first “Trekkie” in biblical history, received a divine vision that propelled him beyond the familiar. Much like the iconic opening narration from Star Trek—“Space... the Final Frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise...”—Abraham embarked on a journey where no man of God had dared to go before.

Unlike Captain Kirk’s intergalactic escapades, Abraham’s mission was grounded in faith. God’s unobstructed vision prompted him to leave his homeland (Acts 7:3), taking calculated risks and rallying followers who shared his purpose. It’s worth noting that Abraham’s family found his calling equally peculiar, leaving behind financial prospects, career stability, and the comfort of familiar surroundings to minister in uncharted territory.<sup>1</sup>

Visionary chaplains exhibit idealism and a non-conformist outlook. They often disregard established patterns, policies, and structures, driven by a pioneering spirit. These leaders thrive in prison environments lacking pre-existing chaplaincy programs or established church structures. Moreover, they can play a vital role in restoring chaplaincies marred by past conflicts or ineffective ministers.

However, visionary chaplains face challenges. Their untested methods can create confusion, and their propensity for abrupt changes may leave staff and volunteers feeling unheard. Appreciation for prior work often takes a backseat to their unwavering focus on the ministry’s vision. Effective communication becomes paramount articulating the vision while adhering to internal management procedures ensures committed followers. Yet, a misstep can lead volunteers to perceive manipulation and abandonment.

In addition to this, custody will shun the chaplain with the “blue wall” if the chaplain does not include them in the visionary plans. Custody will perceive the chaplain as a radical who is trying to radicalize the inmate population with recent programs and ideas.

Before attempting any changes, one way for the chaplain to create trust is to build a support team of well-trained staff and volunteers. Be cautious, the volunteers and staff must buy into the visionary plan as if it is their own before they will join in the journey.



In the challenging environment of a prison, chaplains face unique dynamics. One critical aspect is navigating relationships with custody staff—the very individuals responsible for maintaining order and security. Failure to engage custody effectively can lead to what’s colloquially known as the “blue wall,” where chaplains find themselves isolated due to perceived radicalism.

A chaplain with a clearly articulated vision, which is also adopted by all important parties, and has demonstrated successfulness, will be able to transform the prison. Others will follow when they see that volunteers have been rewarded for their sacrificial commitment with success. This will become evident when the chaplain encourages volunteers, shows appreciation for volunteers, recognizes volunteers for their efforts and demonstrates the unbridled enthusiasm of a visionary leader pursuing God’s purpose.

Here are essential considerations for chaplains seeking to foster trust and implement visionary plans.

### **Engage Custody Personnel**

Custody officers play a pivotal role in prison operations. Ignoring their perspectives or excluding them from visionary initiatives can create unnecessary friction. Chaplains must actively involve custody staff, seeking their input and addressing their concerns.

Avoid being perceived as a radical by demonstrating respect for established protocols and procedures. While innovation is essential, it should not disrupt the delicate balance of security and order.

### **Building a Support Team**

Trust begins with a well-trained support team. Chaplains should assemble a group of dedicated staff and volunteers who share the vision. These individuals become advocates for the chaplain’s initiatives.

The key lies in ownership. Team members must embrace the visionary plan as if it were their own. Their commitment stems from understanding the purpose and believing in its transformative potential.

### **Articulating and Demonstrating Vision**

A chaplain’s vision must be clear, concise, and compelling. When all stakeholders—volunteers, staff, and custody—understand the purpose, they become invested partners.

Successful implementation reinforces trust. Chaplains should celebrate wins, especially those resulting from collective effort. Recognizing volunteers’ sacrificial commitment and showing appreciation fosters a positive atmosphere.

Enthusiasm is contagious. A visionary leader, fueled by purpose, inspires others to follow. When the chaplain embodies unwavering dedication, the prison community takes notice.

In summary, bridging the gap between custody and vision requires strategic communication, collaboration, and a commitment to transformation. Chaplains who navigate these dynamics skillfully can indeed impact lives within prison walls. Visionary chaplains chart new courses, but their success hinges on balancing audacity with empathy and fostering genuine collaboration.

## Ezra: The Merciful Chaplain

### God's Endorsement: Inspiring Leadership Recognition

Leadership, often defined as the ability to guide, direct, or influence people, takes on a profound dimension when viewed through a spiritual lens. Spiritual leadership transcends mere worldly influence—it is a divine calling, orchestrated by God's hand. In this context, Ezra stands as an exemplar of spiritual leadership, demonstrating qualities that extend beyond conventional leadership paradigms.

God's endorsement of a leader transcends mere human approval—it carries divine weight. When followers recognize God's hand at work through a leader, their motivation to follow intensifies. Ezra, a pivotal figure in Jewish history, exemplifies this dynamic. His leadership not only rediscovered God's presence but also demonstrated partnership with the divine.



### Ezra's Divine Anointing

Ezra's leadership is not rooted solely in human wisdom or strategic acumen. Instead, it bears the unmistakable mark of divine anointing. When God designates a chaplain, He equips them for their appointed task. Ezra's mission—rebuilding a nation and leading a reformation among the Jewish people—requires more than earthly qualifications; it demands a heart attuned to God's purposes.

### Navigating Challenges

Unlike graduates of leadership schools, Ezra's preparation occurs amid tumultuous circumstances: confusion, compromise, and conflict. His people are returning to the Promised Land, rebuilding their nation. Similarly, within prison walls, where chaos and brokenness prevail, God appoints chaplains to extend His mercy and forgiveness. These ministers recognize that crises can serve as vehicles for revealing God's compassionate love.

### The Heart's Preparation

God's focus rests not on Ezra's intellectual prowess but on the condition of his heart. True leadership maturity emerges from heart transformation, not mere mental education. Ezra's commitment to studying God's Word cultivates a passion that allows him to discern divine direction. Spiritual leadership begins with an earnest desire to explore Scripture's depths.

### Communion with the Almighty

Ezra's wonder at the richness of God's Word leads him to fervent prayer—a communion that sustains him. Chaplains, too, must maintain a strong connection with God. Prayer becomes the lens through which they recognize His providential guidance. Passionate study and intercession reveal God's heart for the incarcerated.

**Compassion for the Corrupt**

Inmates, with their brokenness and corrupt nature, require chaplains who see beyond surface needs. A chaplain's close communion with God enables them to reflect His glory and view inmates through divine eyes. Only when God deeply nurtures a chaplain's heart can they discern which needs He intends to supply.

**Trusting God's Provision**

While the world relies on programs, planning, and strategies, spiritually minded chaplains develop a different approach. They trust God to provide resources. Seeking divine provisions through prayer, they recognize that true leadership transcends media strategies. In God's ministry plan, His work takes center stage, and all glory belongs to Him.

**Ezra: More Than an Instrument**

Ezra's leadership was no passive role. He wasn't a mere servant executing commands; he actively partnered with God's purpose for Israel. True spiritual leaders possess a unique awareness of others—individuals also gifted by God—who join them in advancing His cause. Chaplains, too, must recognize and inspire others to align with God's plan. Despite their personal relationship with God, chaplains understand that ministry tasks require collective effort.

**Rediscovering Missing Elements**

Ezra's discovery of ancient scrolls ignited national repentance. Similarly, chaplains within prison ministry must rediscover essential elements. Their presentation of God's Word—akin to an "Ezra moment"—can lead to transformation. Zealous faith emerges when believers encounter Scripture with fresh eyes, understanding its profound meaning and practical application.

**Confronting Evil: A Divine Calling**

Spiritual leaders face unique challenges. Their calling extends beyond leadership seminars or textbooks. God ordains them to guide followers through crises of faith. In prison settings, where turmoil and pain prevail, chaplains become vessels of God's mercy. Without His endorsement and enablement, their efforts would falter.

**Ezra's Legacy: God's Hesed Love**

Ezra's life exemplifies a leader ordained by God, navigating crises with courage. Through him, God demonstrated hesed—steadfast love—for His people. Ezra's sanctified strategies and risk-taking flowed from divine purpose and presence. Identifying the root of crises, he implemented God's plan at precisely the right time.<sup>ii</sup>

## Jacob - The Pragmatic Chaplain

### Balancing Practical Solutions and Spiritual Guidance

In the realm of troubleshooting, a fundamental principle advises starting with the simplest and most probable solution. This concept is aptly captured by the adage: “When you hear hoof beats, think of horses, not zebras.” In practical terms, it means that when faced with an issue, consider straightforward explanations before delving into complex or unlikely scenarios. For instance, when calling a help desk, the initial questions often revolve around basic checks: Is the device plugged in? Does the power outlet function?

Now, let’s delve into the life of Jacob—the Pragmatic Chaplain. Jacob’s approach to success was marked by pragmatism. He navigated challenges using shrewdness, craftiness, and unwavering determination. However, this practical mindset sometimes obscured his broader vision. Inherited traits played a significant role: from his father, he gained domesticity and a deep attachment to family, while his mother Rebekah passed on qualities like shrewdness, initiative, and resourcefulness. Yet, Jacob’s character also revealed ethical flaws—deceit and cowardice—stemming from unbelief and a desire to secure his own fortunes through cunning means.

From his father, Jacob inherited that domesticity and affectionate attachment to his home circle which appears in his life from beginning to end. He inherited shrewdness, initiative, and resourcefulness from Rebekah—qualities which she shared apparently with her brother Laban and all his family. The conspicuous ethical faults of Abraham and Isaac alike are wanted of candor and want of courage. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the same failings in Jacob. Deceit and cowardice are visible repeatedly in the impartial record of his life. Both spring from unbelief. They belong to the natural man. . . . Whether through inheritance, or as a fruit of early teaching, he had as the inestimable treasure, the true capital of his spiritual career, a firm conviction of the value of what God had promised, and a supreme ambition to obtain it for himself and his children. But against the Divine plan for the attainment of this goal by faith, there worked in Jacob constantly his natural qualities, the non-moral as well as the immoral qualities, that urged him to save himself and his fortunes by "works"—by sagacity, cunning, compromise, pertinacity—anything and everything that would anticipate God’s accomplishing His purpose in His own time and His own way. In short, "the end justifies the means" is the program that, more than all others, finds illustration and rebuke in the character of Jacob.<sup>iii</sup>

Jacob’s leadership exemplified the notion that “the end justifies the means.” He operated in the present, resolving crises with immediate solutions rather than considering long-term remedies. As chaplains, we encounter similar dilemmas. The easiest path often aligns with pragmatic solutions, where short-term gains take precedence. However, we must balance this with a visionary outlook. Dependence on the Holy Spirit and a commitment to long-term solutions remain essential. While practicality has its place, spiritual guidance should guide our decisions.

Jacob’s impulsive nature—seen in dealings with Laban and Esau—highlighted the tension between pragmatism and divine purpose. Ultimately, only God’s promises and providence allowed Jacob to fulfill his destiny. The refiner’s fire revealed the true path. As chaplains facing security issues, we may be tempted to rely solely on “street smarts.” Yet, a spiritually-minded approach calls for reflection, prayer, and trust in God—a pursuit of lasting solutions beyond immediate fixes.



But besides these sorrows, God's providence dealt with him in ways most remarkable, and more instructive for the study of such Divine dealings than in the case of any other character in the Old Testament. By alternate giving and withholding, by danger here and deliverance there, by good and evil report, now by failure of "best laid schemes" and now by success with seemingly inadequate means, God developed in him the habit—not native to him as it seems to have been in part to Abraham and to Joseph, —of reliance on Divine power and guidance, of accepting the Divine will, of realizing the Divine nearness and faithfulness.<sup>iv</sup>

Jacob took God's course in "Divine Training." God transformed Jacob so that he would triumph over his own nature. This is seen when God changed his name from "Jacob" to "Israel". The chaplain must always be mindful that God wants to transform the chaplain as well the inmate. God's heartfelt desire for total transformation often interferes with the efforts of chaplains who seek practical solutions first.

## Joseph

### The Enduring Chaplain

The following excerpt, taken from an Anglican pastor's sermon, describes what happens when a person spends time in the pits and prisons.

I call this kind of place God's Waiting Room. The waiting room is the place where you can do nothing, and you think God is doing nothing. It is the place where your hands are tied, and he doesn't care - or so you think. It is a place where you feel like you are all alone. Like God has forgotten you. . . . and you are in God's Waiting Room!

Do you find you are in God's waiting Room this day? That place where your hands are tied? The key to the waiting room season is to look in that very place to the Lord Jesus. Look to him, lean upon him, and reach out to him. You will find him there with you, and when you do, you will also find that this is the place where God does some of his deepest work.

Renewed Strength – updrafts of the Spirit. Character that is tempered and true. Prayer that is focused on Him, the Lord who is more than enough. And guidance – direction for the days ahead. It is the place where God does some of his absolute best work. <sup>v</sup>

Joseph's character was profoundly shaped during his time in God's "waiting room." It was here that he learned to conserve resources, value relationships, and place his trust in God. These experiences fortified his core values, enabling him to endure periods of darkness and hopelessness.

Entering God's training ground as a young man, Joseph emerged as a strong leader capable of making sound decisions and developing long-term solutions. The deprivation of basic needs fostered a keen awareness of future necessities. Coupled with God's blessings, this produced a leader of Joseph's caliber.

Chaplains often face financial challenges, struggling daily to acquire necessary materials and meet logistical demands. Typically working in isolation, they find that these periods of waiting strengthen their relationship with God.



Joseph's lean years, marked by familial betrayal, honed his organizational skills and ability to implement detailed plans. He demonstrated dependability, loyalty, problem-solving abilities, administrative gifts, and decisive action.

However, strategic leaders must be cautious of making decisions based on inaccurate information. Thorough research and comprehensive questioning can save momentous time and prevent many issues.

I am confident that any Christian or secular organization would benefit from having a Joseph-like figure in a chaplaincy role. Such a strategic decision-maker, equipped with a servant's heart, divine inspiration, and financial acumen, can accomplish remarkable projects.

The Christ-like character of chaplains who use their gifts to bless their communities is evident. Joseph's response to his brothers and family exemplified a Christ-like attitude that all chaplains should emulate.

As we grow in Christ, our leadership styles evolve and mature. Every chaplain should strive to understand their fundamental leadership style and allow God to shape them into leaders equipped for His purposes. In the crucible of trials, God reveals the true nature of a chaplain.

Waiting rooms vary greatly; some offer luxurious comforts, while others provide only the bare essentials. Some have no resources other than God's grace. In these environments, chaplains learn to shepherd those in prison, where waiting rooms are often charged with emotion and turmoil. Crisis is inevitable, and chaplains must guide their flocks through these challenges.<sup>vi</sup>

## Hezekiah

### The Crisis Chaplain

For correctional chaplains, it is not a matter of "if" but "when" another crisis will occur. Aspiring chaplains must be adept at handling crises.

A crisis is defined as a period of uncertainty that disrupts normal activities. It often involves a series of emotionally charged and dramatic events. Decisions made during a crisis significantly impact the future, often serving as pivotal moments in life. Understanding crises, how people respond to them, and how they are managed is crucial for a chaplain's success.

One notable example of successful crisis leadership is Winston Churchill during World War II. As Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Churchill faced the daunting task of leading his country through one of its darkest periods.

When Churchill took office in 1940, Britain was on the brink of defeat. The German forces had overrun much of Europe, and the threat of invasion loomed large. Churchill's leadership was characterized by his unwavering resolve, inspirational speeches, and ability to rally the British people. His famous speeches, such as "We shall fight on the beaches," instilled hope and determination in a nation under siege.



Churchill's strategic decisions, including the coordination of the Allied forces and the emphasis on technological innovation, played a crucial role in turning the tide of the war. His leadership not only helped secure victory for the Allies but also left a lasting legacy of resilience and courage.<sup>vii</sup>

A primary responsibility for chaplains during a crisis is to restore normalcy. This involves guiding individuals through the crisis to a point where life resumes its normal traits, even if it does not return to its previous state.

People in crisis often experience normal reactions, such as fear, crying, and screaming, but perceive them as abnormal. During these times, chaplains must clarify the crisis, assure individuals of God's presence and power, develop a response strategy, and lead others through the crisis to restore a semblance of normalcy. The events of 9/11 highlight the importance of effective crisis chaplaincy, which requires a different leadership style than everyday chaplaincy. Hezekiah's example provides valuable insights for developing crisis leadership.

Preparation is the best strategy in a crisis. Chaplains must be ready to provide support at any time. I carry various resources to refresh my memory on crisis management. Reviewing these materials regularly ensures preparedness. Once a chaplain arrives at a crisis site, it is too late to study crisis chaplaincy; it is time to apply previously learned knowledge.

A thorough assessment of the crisis is essential before taking action. Additionally, a crisis chaplain must recognize their role as God's voice and presence in the situation. Identifying and understanding the true source of the crisis can save lives, time, and resources.

A chaplain must clearly identify the crisis's source and demonstrate its seriousness to those involved without exacerbating the situation. Leading from the front and demonstrating the ability to handle and resolve the crisis is critical. This involves seeking wisdom from God through prayer and requesting His intervention. Prayer should be the chaplain's first line of defense and response. With a clear understanding of the crisis, gained through prayer and preparation, the chaplain must develop the resources and strategy to resolve the conflict.

*Mitigating the crisis is the one constant goal  
of the crisis Chaplain with a vision to return  
everyone to normalcy*

"Be careful not to make unwise decisions or take careless actions when the crisis is past that might lead to a greater crisis."<sup>viii</sup> Words used, and actions taken during times of disaster and devastation can be far more harmful than the event itself.

Of all the five godly men we looked at Joseph's leadership style may serve best of all in the prison. This type of chaplain will be a good manager who follows policies, pays attention to details, and has patient endurance to see everything through to the end, despite difficulties.



## SINK OR SWIM

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM A CHAPLAINCY SURVIVOR

Although not an exhaustive list, the following lessons learned illustrate some the key points to remember as a chaplain. Over time, application of the following list may make the difference between a mediocre chaplain and an outstanding chaplain.

The chaplain must live consistently with his or her holy calling to draw people to God. The chaplain does this not only through ministry but by the life he or she lives. “Holiness in a minister is at once his chief necessity and his goodliest ornament. Mere moral excellence is not enough, there must be the higher virtue; a consistent character there must be, but this must be anointed with the sacred consecrating oil, or that which makes us most fragrant to God and man will be wanting.”<sup>1</sup>

The calling of God to chaplaincy is a priceless treasure in an earthen vessel. It is filled with an intense passion to teach. It also includes a goodly measure of giftedness with evidence that the chaplain's labors are recognized by the people of God. Chaplains can endure the severest trials of ministry when they have a warm, earnest desire for chaplaincy, cloaked in ordained competency and the armor of the endorsement of God's call.

Prayer must be the cornerstone of the chaplain's life during times of trial. “Most preachers who depend on God's Spirit will tell you that their freshest and best thoughts are not those which were premeditated, but ideas which came to them, flying as on the wings of angels; unexpected treasures brought on a sudden by celestial hands, seeds of the flowers of paradise, wafted from the mountains of myrrh.”<sup>2</sup>

Prayer unlocks a sermon's message as well as the hearts of men. It instills passion and unction in the chaplain. These blessings from God cannot be earned, bought, or taught. “Unction is a thing which you cannot manufacture, and its counterfeits are worse than worthless; yet in itself priceless, and beyond measure needful if you would edify believers and bring sinners to Jesus. To the secret pleader with God this secret is committed; upon his rests the dew of the Lord, about him is the perfume which makes glad the heart.”<sup>3</sup> This will overflow into the chaplain's public prayer.

A chaplain's public prayer is often far more important than preaching. “Let your prayers be earnest, full of fire, vehemence, prevalence. I pray the Holy Ghost to instruct every student at this College so to offer public prayer that God shall always be served of his best. Let your petitions be plain and heart-felt; and while your people may sometimes feel that the sermon was below the mark, may they also feel that the prayer compensated for all.”<sup>4</sup>

Prayer is important when selecting and delivering sermons to the inmate population. Sermons should be planned and written while following the leading of the Holy Spirit. The chaplain's messages should be filled with scriptural foundations and communicated with strength and conviction. They should be arranged in a pattern easily received and understood by the average inmate. Sermons should always be filled with freshness, Christ, and the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1954), p. 18

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 45

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 50

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 69

The text for the sermon should always developed with attention to the Holy Spirit's guidance. The chaplain must be flexible at this point. Responding to inmate requests should also be part of the process. Chaplains should avoid overly rigid preplanning that might make them unresponsive to the changing needs of the flock.

Let the Word and its meaning be the overriding force of the sermon's message. “. . . re-asserting my opinion, which guided by discretion and judgment, we may occasionally employ spiritualizing with good effect to our people; certainly, we shall interest them and keep them awake.”<sup>5</sup>

The phrase, “So heavenly minded no earthly good” may describe some of our Christian colleagues. Chaplains should be sociable. They should demonstrate consistent, cheerful, godly character during conversation, social events, and daily life.

Everyday circumstances are a sovereign tool of God can use to reach people with the presence of Christ. “I am persuaded that one reason our working men so universally keep clear of ministers is because they abhor their artificial and unmanly ways. If they saw us, in the pulpit and out of it, acting like real men, and speaking naturally, like honest men, they would come around us.”<sup>6</sup>

Looking back over my career, one choice I made has paid great dividends. I went through correctional officer boot camp training. I qualified, passing both physical exams and written tests, to become a boot camp drill instructor. The respect gained and the appreciation gained from this has been priceless. To this day it is a valuable aspect of my chaplaincy. My passion to know what custody officers experience drove me to make such sacrifices.

What happens to a chaplain who loses his passion, earnestness, and zealous desire for God-ordained ministry? “If all the lights in the outside world are quenched, the lamp which burns in the sanctuary ought to still to remain undimmed; for that fire no curfew must ever be rung.”<sup>7</sup> The chaplain must be eternally re-kindled by the flames of Christ and His eternal love for ministry, “keep close to God, and keep close to your fellow men whom you are seeking to bless.”<sup>8</sup>

What helps keep the holy fire burning in the chaplain's heart is being a life-long learner, always growing and ever challenging oneself to move forward in commitment, calling, education, and giftedness. An intimate relationship with Christ also rekindles the flames of passion and earnest zeal in the chaplain's study, life, and public ministry.

Many ministers blame circumstances for their failure when they do not grow because they lack spiritual devotion and prayer. A chaplain who stops growing and learning will also stop teaching and preaching with Spirit-led effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

The pressures of chaplaincy often wear chaplains down. They may lash out, criticizing family, friends, and flock. In times like these a chaplain's life can become an epitome of cynicism, injuring everyone within striking distance. Are you an encourager? Some people aren't. Their pessimistic outlook on life spills into relationships. They dampen morale by dwelling on problems, never on praise.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 109

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 167

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 307

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 318

<sup>9</sup> Stan Toler. Stan Toler's Practical Guide for Pastoral Ministry. (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), p. 34; 42-43

Develop a personal style that promotes the success of others. Look family members in the eye and listen to that they say. Ask how they are and what they need. Frequently say things like “I love you,” “thank you,” and “good job.” Your personal style will set the tone in your home.

Everyone thrives on encouragement. You are in a leadership position today because someone believed in you—and told you so. Remember how that affirmation motivated you and practice it. Provide affirmation, and you’ll help you family succeed.<sup>10</sup>

“Enjoying remarkable success does not depend on having a great ego. In fact, the opposite is always true. Those who think the most of themselves are usually respected little by others. But those who show respect to others and not seek personal recognition are given greater respect—respect that is earned and not demanded.<sup>11</sup> Chaplains must be humble and willing accept others.

We do not suggest compromising one's faith or altering the Gospel for the sake of acceptance. But we do suggest demonstrating respect that comes from the love of God. This includes a love for people of other faiths. This will create professionalism and leadership in the chaplain, as well as respect for the chaplain.

In fact, one way to respond to this pressure to make compromises in one's faith is to be committed to continue moving forward with a growing vision for Protestant ministry. Holding a fresh vision at the forefront of daily ministry will keep the ministry moving forward while at the same time thwarting critics.

Vision for ministry often quickly evaporates from a busy chaplain's mind. Administrative duties, scheduling of ministries and recruiting volunteers, along with training them, often betrays a chaplain's desire to fulfill a vision for Godly chaplaincy.

Chaplains lose this battle if they do not delegate responsibilities and let go of ministries they cannot fulfill. It is true that it will be difficult to see others perform ministry that you wish was your own. But if you supervise and supply leadership, the same results of the vision for ministry will still be evident.

Consistent mentoring and cross-training are examples of smart delegation. Cross training should provide a sense of confidence for those performing ministry. They will realize that they are not alone. They will see that there are others who can assist them. It will also provide qualified replacements during times of sickness, emergency, etc.

Beyond delegation and cross training, wise risk taking is fundamental. When risk becomes necessary some questions to ask are: “What is the worst that could happen?” and “What is my contingency plan?” These questions provide information chaplains need if they wish to be movers and motivators.

When the social, moral, and religious climate of our nation is taken into consideration, chaplaincy is no place for the faint of the heart. Chaplains must be providing a model of the Christian life worthy of being copied. “A mentor is a godly leader/coach who has committed time and energy to sharing personal growth and ministerial and administrative skills with a spiritual son or daughter—a believer who has obvious spiritual gifts and a teachable spirit.”<sup>12</sup> Every chaplain

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 94

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 176

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 241

should have at least one younger person to mentor in this fashion. Every chaplain should also have a chaplaincy peer mentoring them in prison ministry. This will save much time and grief.

As a mentor the chaplain should develop a visionary's heart that inspires others to dream. Seeing a plan to get through the problem, a path where no one has journeyed, refusing to pander to critics, plodding then running and seeing power in the plan, will inspire those around you to dream and see the impossible.<sup>13</sup>

Inspiring a vision for prison ministry in others means having the ability to see what they cannot see. If a chaplain grasps this one concept his or her ministry will always grow and adapt to change. To become a better chaplain in ministry the following goals should be considered.

- ✓ Learn to take responsibility for your actions, even when you are wrong.
- ✓ Learn to be an encourager and positive not negative and cynical.
- ✓ Learn to handle criticism, negative and positive, with integrity and dignity.
- ✓ Learn delegation, you do not need to do everything yourself, others can perform the ministry as good if not better than you.
- ✓ Learn how to effectively cross train staff in other responsibilities apart from their own faith group.
- ✓ Learn how to take risks in a professional manner.
- ✓ Learn to not be afraid of being a dreamer.
- ✓ Learn to continue to improve public and private life with the model of becoming like Christ so that any criticisms and any trials are quickly rebuffed with a life of consistency in character.
- ✓ Learn to continue to live consistent with the call to chaplaincy by being ever thankful for the harvest God so graciously provides each day.
- ✓ Learn to grow in private and public prayer life recognizing the importance its plays in hearing from God for guidance and in finding those precious jewels in the Scriptures.
- ✓ Learn to develop public prayer life to remain steadfast in using the name of Christ and the Gospel in all public settings of prayer.
- ✓ Learn to act like a man without compromising testimony among the Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers.
- ✓ Learn to re-kindle the passion for the chaplaincy with finding times of drawing close to Christ and walking in the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ Learn to continue to challenge contemporaries with the foundational principles of the chaplaincy which have seemingly been born from the day of Pentecost to the present-day church.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 254-256

## END NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Where\\_no\\_man\\_has\\_gone\\_before](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Where_no_man_has_gone_before)

<sup>ii</sup> Lovingkindness; God's promised love for his people Israel. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chesed.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/isbe/isbe.cfm?id=4783>

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/isbe/isbe.cfm?id=4783>

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.ststephenschurch.net/Worship/Sermons/2008/acts/060808GChapman\\_Act24\\_27.pdf](http://www.ststephenschurch.net/Worship/Sermons/2008/acts/060808GChapman_Act24_27.pdf) at <http://www.ststephenschurch.net/>

<sup>vi</sup> Here are some examples of chaplaincy waiting rooms:

1. **Hospital Waiting Rooms:** Chaplains often provide support in hospital waiting rooms, where families and friends wait for news about their loved ones undergoing surgery or treatment. [These spaces can be filled with anxiety and uncertainty, and chaplains offer comfort, prayer, and a listening ear<sup>1</sup>.](#)
2. **Trauma Centers:** In trauma centers, chaplains play a crucial role in supporting families of patients who have experienced severe injuries or life-threatening situations. [They help manage the emotional turmoil and provide a calming presence in a high-stress environment<sup>2</sup>.](#)
3. **Prison Waiting Areas:** Chaplains in correctional facilities often work in waiting areas where families come to visit inmates. [These spaces can be emotionally charged, and chaplains provide spiritual support and guidance to both inmates and their families<sup>3</sup>.](#)
4. **Military Bases:** On military bases, chaplains support service members and their families in waiting areas before deployments or during times of crisis. They offer counseling, prayer, and a sense of community during these challenging times.
5. **Hospice Care Facilities:** In hospice care, chaplains support patients and their families in waiting rooms where end-of-life care is provided. They offer comfort, spiritual guidance, and help families navigate the emotional complexities of this stage of life.

Each of these waiting rooms presents unique challenges and opportunities for chaplains to provide meaningful support and care. If you have any specific context or additional details you'd like to explore, feel free to let me know!

<sup>vii</sup> A.I. Copilot

<sup>viii</sup> Elmer Towns, [Biblical Models for Leadership](#). (Mason, OH : Cengage Learning, 2007) p. 110