

The Complete

**Community
Chaplain's**

Handbook



Mark Cress
Chris Hobgood Dwayne Reece

The Complete Community Chaplain's Handbook
By Mark Cress, Chris Hobgood and Dwayne Reece
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Dedication

The authors wish to acknowledge Jesus as the true Author and Finisher of their lives. He has given them collectively more than fifty years on this Earth with helpmates to whom they dedicate this book. They are:

Linda Cress Kimberly Hobgood Debbie Reece

Without their ministry as Jesus-filled wives, this book would never have been written.

Complete Handbook of Community Chaplaincy

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Preface

Although this work may ultimately be found most often in an academic setting, it may surprise people that the authors did not set out to produce a scholarly treatise or defense of any kind. Rather, the objective was that readers be compelled to engage God, other people, and even themselves as they explore the ministry of chaplaincy in the United States through the eyes, ears, and hearts of those who have walked it out.

These pages are intended to provide a guidebook of not only the “why’s”, but also the “how-to’s”, for real-life, on-the-ground situations encountered every day in the work of community chaplaincy. They are also designed to facilitate the deeply probing questions that will focus and solidify one’s efforts, as well as clarify and confront relationships and personal issues. In other words, this book is not for the faint of heart!

The authors have committed their lives to serving Christ through chaplaincy. In addition to their own twenty-plus years of service as chaplains, God has blessed them with a team of certified chaplains from which to draw rich and abiding training experiences.

Corporate Chaplains of America agreed in 2005 to work with a leading US seminary to assist in offering a course in the fundamentals of corporate chaplaincy for a future Master of Arts in Workplace Ministry degree program. One early challenge proved to be the fact that no text existed for such a class. Lanphier Press graciously stepped up to ensure a publication would be produced to allow the process to move forward.

The authors were tasked to create a volume that is both practical and thorough. Although no single work short of the Scriptures can ever hope to fully cover even a single subject of study, a textbook emerged that has since been used by schools of higher learning. Many of the principles found in workplace ministry are applicable to other areas of ministry. What follows is a set of ministry principles that can be applied in a variety of circumstances to utilize process management training in the greatest mission field: the sphere of influence in which God has placed you!

Acknowledgements

Pulling together a work like this is never accomplished in a vacuum. For every writer in a book project, there are always scores of players in the background who are rarely recognized for all the extra efforts necessary to make it a reality. The authors of this text wish to thank the precious people who have worked tirelessly to keep this project on target and to get it ultimately into your hands today.

Cindy Rice coordinated every word of this text between three authors and many revisions. She proofed every syllable and corrected many errors before the text was ever seen by other professionals on the team. Projects such as this do not happen without talented, caring people like Cindy.

Robin Crabtree artistically designed the cover and skillfully typeset the text. In addition, she offered edit references and technical assistance without which we would still be at ground zero.

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Also, special thanks to Howard Piekarz and the fine team at Edwards Brothers.

INTRODUCTION

————— The Complete Community Chaplain’s Handbook —————

Chaplaincy is a concept that is often new to many people. Ask most people about chaplains and they will be familiar only with hospital chaplains or military chaplains. Put the words community and chaplain together to form the title “community chaplain,” and most often you will be met with a look of puzzlement and the obvious question: “What is a community chaplain?” The goal of this book is not only to answer this question, but also to equip the prospective chaplain for the greatest of callings to serve in the greatest of mission fields - the sphere of influence in which God has placed him.

While the industry awareness may be quite low, the reality is that there are more than 4,000 chaplains serving in the American workplace today, and the trend toward the provision of chaplains caring for employees is on the upswing. Companies as small as Price’s Auto Body & Paint Shop of Raleigh, NC with 25 employees, and companies as large as Southeastern Freight Lines employing over 7,000, are seeing the benefits of caring for their most valuable of assets - their associates. However, it is not just private Christian-owned-and-operated companies fueling this trend. Even publicly held companies utilize workplace chaplains. Tyson Foods relies on 130 part-time chaplains serving in 242 plants to care for its workforce of 114,000. John Tyson, the grandson of the founder of the company and current CEO, is the driving force behind the program. This trend of receptivity to faith in the workplace is extending to other areas where people spend time: on little league sports fields, in community swimming pools and clubhouses, in book clubs, public school systems, and even in city government.

The Complete Community Chaplain’s Handbook was born out of a decade of providing genuine caring in the workplace through the work of Corporate Chaplains of America. The past ten years of experience has been invested in doing two things: first, serving the needs of employees and second, developing a process-managed approach to further the care of employees. The first goal is being accomplished every day as chaplains traverse cubicle aisles, loading docks, and office buildings across America seeking to impact the lives of associates in crisis. This experience and knowledge base has been applied to a larger audience than just the workplace. It can be used to

Introduction



claim your community, your sphere of influence, for Christ. Within the pages of this book, this process-managed approach to chaplaincy has been distilled into workable teaching material. Our purpose in producing it is to contribute to the expansion of the chaplaincy movement, not only in the U.S. but throughout the world.

This volume explores, in exhaustive fashion, the chaplaincy movement from the Christian perspective. It will briefly trace the history of chaplaincy, examine target mission fields for the community chaplain, and cover the practical aspects of the myriad of ministry opportunities encountered by a chaplain. In its pragmatism, the goal of *The Complete Community Chaplain's Handbook* is to equip men and women for the work of chaplaincy where God has "planted" them. Interspersed throughout the text will be a combination of practical exercises and case studies designed to engage the chaplaincy student in the equipping process.

The handbook is organized into four units. The first unit highlights some specific areas in which a community chaplain may serve. Unit 2 lays a foundation for community chaplaincy. The calling to chaplaincy and the biblical basis for chaplaincy is explored, and the challenge of postmodernism and multiculturalism is discussed. Unit 3 details the core principles of community chaplaincy. These principles serve as the guiding force for the care provided by chaplains in a wide spectrum of situations. The book concludes in Unit 4 with practical principles for equipping the chaplain to help individuals in times of crisis.

Community chaplaincy is not a new idea. In fact, a close examination of the Scriptures dates it back to the days of Jesus and the work of the first century church. One does not need to peer far into American history to see how a community chaplain can be effective. Take a look at the community in which God has placed you and



Fig. 1.2 Companies of all shapes and sizes are beginning to provide chaplaincy as a benefit for their employees.

claim it for Him. Jeremiah Lanphier, a businessman in New York City, ignited a revival in 1851 through the vehicle of a simple lunchtime prayer meeting. Today, that movement, awakened a century and a half ago, finds its expression through the conduit of more than 1,000 workplace ministries. These ministries function through a variety of methods, including workplace prayer meetings and Bible

studies, Christian business mentoring groups like CI2, workplace ministry conferences, and chaplaincy. Only God knows how He will use your willingness to be a community chaplain to use your sphere of influence for His glory!

What is a community chaplain?

Chaplaincy enjoys a long history dating back to the man who came to be known as St. Martin of Tours, who is recognized as the initiator of the office of chaplain. While still a soldier, Martin one day encountered a cold beggar. Moved by compassion, he removed the heavy cape from his uniform, sliced it in half with his sword, and shared it with the man. This became the start of his legendary service as a chaplain. The picture this paints of chaplaincy is wonderful. A chaplain is one who comes alongside to share with and help another in distress. Later that night Martin dreamed he saw Christ wearing the half of the cloak he had given away to the beggar. Among Martin's congregations of service, the half cloak he kept became known as a "cappa" and was an object of great respect. The place in which the "cappa" was kept was called "cappella," which

through the French word “chappele” became our word “chapel.” The priest in charge was called “chappellanus,” or “chappelain” in French. The chaplain is the keeper of the cloak or the keeper of compassion.

Simply defined, a chaplain is a spiritual caregiver. Dictionaries usually classify a chaplain as a member of the clergy attached to a chapel who conducts religious services for an institution, such as a prison, a hospital, or for the armed services. With this definition in mind, this text will identify a community chaplain as a personal and spiritual caregiver whose primary job is to serve the emotional, physical, spiritual, and personal needs of people in the community around him.

What is a process-managed approach to community chaplaincy?

Process management is something most people would recognize but may not readily be able to define. Perhaps an example will best describe the term. If I succumb to my children’s pleas for a McDonald’s cheeseburger on the way to the beach, process management demands that a cheeseburger in another town taste the same as the one I buy them in our hometown of Raleigh, NC. Why? Because McDonald’s uses the same ingredients, trains their employees in the same cooking process, and utilizes the same equipment in every location in order to prepare a cheeseburger with consistent taste and consistent quality.

Likewise, a process-managed approach to community chaplaincy stipulates that chaplaincy care look the same in Raleigh, NC as it looks in Grants Pass, OR. Does this mean the chaplains look the same? The simple answer is no. Process management in chaplaincy means that the process of care provided to the community utilizes a consistency that spans culture, age, geography, and uniqueness of circumstances, in order to ensure that chaplains are responding in similar fashion throughout the various communities they serve. Process management is accomplished significantly through a proper training model, extends through the chaplain introduction process, and finds its completion through a consistency of response among chaplain team members to the variety of crises encountered.

Process management can be applied to community chaplaincy in this way: each chaplain has a specific mission field in which he serves. Relationships are built with those in his community, or mission field, over a period of time. This can be accomplished by regularly scheduled, routine visits that we will call “rounds” with those in

his community. The purpose of these rounds will be explored later in the text, but the ultimate goal is to build a trusting and caring relationship with each person in the mission field. Being available to those in need is crucial to the success of community chaplaincy. Consider having business cards printed that display your contact information. Distribute these cards to those in the mission field.

As the relationship with each person develops, the chaplain is positioned to serve as a pastoral caregiver to those found in the mission field. In essence, the chaplain is serving as a pastor to people who have no pastor. Care can include hospital visitation, marriage or family caregiving, performance of funeral services, and assistance with a variety of other difficult issues. The care provided is always at the initiation of the individual, and only after permission is granted by them. The community chaplain will act as a conduit of care between the church and those in the community.

The caregiving ministry provided by community chaplains has succeeded because it has utilized a very practical strategy to achieve a very focused goal. The goal is simple - the personal and spiritual care of people. The strategy is to reach people where they are by addressing their point of need during a moment of crisis. According to statistics, people are more likely to be found engaged in community activities than at home or church.

In spite of the stress brought on by the competing demands of family and work responsibilities, people continue to ignore avenues such as counselors, employee assistance programs, and the church as sources of strength and support. Data from the Barna Research Group indicates that 60 percent of people do not attend church on a typical weekend. What this data indicates is that a significant majority of people encountered in the community environment have no pastor or other caregiver to turn to during a time of crisis. Perhaps an even more alarming statistic indicates that adults over age eighteen have only a 6 percent likelihood of accepting Christ as Savior.¹ What this statistic tells us in simple terms is that only 6 percent are likely to discover a long term spiritual solution to the problems they face. It is the remaining majority that Community Chaplains of America seeks to reach with the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ.

This book is needed for three basic reasons. First, an understanding of the biblical basis for chaplaincy is essential. Secondly, it will serve as a tool to expand the work of community chaplaincy throughout the United States and the world. Finally, those people God is calling into service as community chaplains will see themselves in these

pages and be drawn into what He wants them to do.

Matthew 9:35-38 records the teaching of Jesus as He spoke of the need for additional workers for the harvest field. Ephesians 4:11-13 records the apostle Paul providing practical instruction about the responsibility of equipping people for the work of service. It is the desire of the authors that this work provide practical instruction, so that men and women might be equipped for the role of community chaplain.

Some who will read this text and be taught its content will recognize God's call upon their lives into community chaplaincy. As this call is answered, Jesus' request for more workers for the harvest field will be answered. Effectively trained chaplains will be essential for the strong growth of the community chaplaincy movement and its continued success in solidly impacting the culture. The words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 9:36-38 can be very easily applied to today's society.

³⁶ He felt great pity for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know where to go for help. They were like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. ³⁸ So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send out more workers for his fields' (Matthew 9:36-38 NLT).

The authors' prayer for the readers of this work is that they might discover some practical help for the most pragmatic of callings - the call to community chaplaincy. Thank you for embarking on this journey of discovery and for allowing us the privilege of sharing some lessons learned along the way.

Stories From the Field: #1

"What Is a Community Chaplain?"*

The day had already been busy. Six hours had been invested in the life of one family, and it was only lunch time. Community Chaplain Alana waited patiently in line to place an order for her favorite sub, a turkey and cheese on honey oat bread. As the line snaked slowly forward, she noticed the gray-haired, slightly balding man with the yellow bow tie staring at the logo prominently displayed over the pocket of her shirt. The blue triangle logo and the words "Community Chaplains of America" were always clearly visible from ten feet away. After five years of chaplain service, Alana was familiar with

the response and knew the question that was coming before it was even asked. "What is a community chaplain?" Alana thought back to the day she had boarded an elevator to the 5th floor cancer wing of Rich Creek Memorial Hospital and had been asked that question for the first time. Her answer that day had been a rambling description that really failed to communicate anything at all. After many false starts, she was eventually able to explain she was an ordinary person who happened to serve in the community, helping those with the problems that come in life. The bow tie man responded to her answer with a puzzled expression and a response she was to hear many more times over the years: "I've never heard of that. I didn't know there was such a thing."

*Individuals in this story have granted permission for its use.

Questions

1. How would you respond to the question, "What is a community chaplain?"
2. What would be your response to the statement, "I didn't know there were community chaplains"?

Practical Exercise # 1

Conduct an internet search using the words "workplace ministry" or "corporate chaplaincy". Identify the top five ministries, spend time examining their web sites, and develop a half page summary of each ministry.

