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# Culham Occasional Paper



## CHAPLAINCY IN CHURCH COLLEGES

A study of the role of the Chaplain in thirteen  
Anglican Colleges of Higher Education

**John D. Gay**

Paper No. 4

CULHAM COLLEGE INSTITUTE  
FOR CHURCH RELATED EDUCATION

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## PREFACE

This paper could not have been written and produced without the active advice and help of a great many people. I am grateful to the many staff of the Church colleges who over the last ten years have shared their thoughts and feelings with me. Principals and chaplains have in particular given me considerable time and thought and without their confidences this report would not have been possible. Specific help has come also from Colin Alves, Kennedy Thom and Humphrey Taylor during their respective terms at Church House, Westminster.

My colleague Judith Muskett has greatly helped both in information collecting and analysing and also in proof reading. My secretary Heather Knight has expertly and cheerfully taken the text through several drafts and has also produced the finished document in such a professional and attractive style.

The two principals I served under as chaplain at Culham, John Wyatt and Steve Denny, helped me enormously in seeing the various issues surrounding chaplaincy and gave me tremendous scope for developing my work and thinking.

An academic reviewer looking at the difficulties that religious studies departments were to be having in holding their own in the hard academic and political power struggles fought inside American universities and colleges, commented laconically that in the final analysis it seemed "nice guys come last". This observation may well have more than a passing relevance for the positions of chaplains in the changing contexts of the Church of England colleges of higher education. I hope this paper may lead to some detailed discussion of how chaplaincy might be structured, evaluated and related to the foundation purposes and aims of the colleges in the future.

John D. Gay  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

When plans were first discussed for a collaborative research project undertaken jointly by this Institute and the Anglican colleges themselves it was agreed that interim discussion papers should be produced whenever appropriate rather than leaving everything for a final report. The idea behind this was that information and ideas should be fed back to the colleges as quickly as possible. Obviously there are dangers in this approach, not least that interim material and results could need substantial modification in the light of subsequent work and analysis. However, the spectre of research reports being read as recent history on account of the speed of changing contexts was also very real. This report is written on the assumption that many of the ideas and issues will be refined and deepened in the light of material coming in from the later stages of the Church Colleges Research Project and also from discussion within the colleges themselves. However the author is sufficiently confident of the basic material and lines of argument contained in the following pages to offer them to a wider audience.

The immediate genesis of the paper was in the autumn of 1982. A meeting of a small group of the Church college chaplains was convened in early December 1982 by the chaplaincies officer, the Revd Kennedy Thom, and I was invited to join them in order to share their thinking and hear some of their ideas relating to a theological critique of the colleges. Several of the chaplains produced short papers and during the ensuing discussion two things became clear to me. First, very little seemed to be known about how other colleges structured their chaplaincies: for instance, we could only hazard a guess as to how many chaplains were still employed as lecturers. Second, there was a considerable feeling of role uncertainty expressed and much of this related to being a chaplain in a Church college. It also emerged that at least two colleges were actively considering altering the style of their chaplaincy and that one or two others which had already changed were with varying degrees of formality reviewing the consequences and results of the change.

The governors of one college which was actively considering a change specifically invited me to advise them on future patterns of chaplaincy in their college in the light of the national scene. They rightly assumed that chaplaincy would be one of the areas investigated within the Church Colleges Research Project and I agreed to produce an interim report on chaplaincy within the Church colleges as a whole and also submit a confidential annexe to their

governors relating this report to the position at their college.

I should state at the outset that the following report is a personal one and I bear full responsibility for its contents. I have ventured some interpretations which are debatable and indeed I hope they will be debated.

An author's personal experience may colour what he writes and so I believe it is necessary for readers to know of my own chaplaincy work. I was for five years a curate in a parish in central London which contained a number of university and medical school hostels. I had no institutional role within the hostels and I came in as an outsider representing the local church. From there I moved on to a Church college as a chaplain/lecturer and stayed for seven years. At the college I had a 75% teaching timetable mainly located in education and in foundation courses and so I came into contact with most of the students through my teaching. There were three other clerics on the staff, including a chaplain emeritus, and a nucleus of other staff, including all the senior management team, who actively supported and contributed to the chaplaincy: essentially a team concept was developed involving some students as well as staff. Thus I have had personal experience of an extreme form of a detached pastoral chaplaincy and also of a highly integrated teaching chaplaincy in a Church college. In their differing ways I greatly enjoyed both and I became aware of the opportunities and limitations of each style of work.

Because of my closeness to the Church college scene and my knowledge of the present colleges I asked one of my colleagues, Judith Muskett, to undertake the detailed content analysis of the prospectuses and she also gathered together some of the factual evidence from various sources.

In terms of method, the time-scale meant that a wide range of views on a sample basis would have to wait until the fuller empirical study of the colleges has been completed. Instead I went first to the available literature on chaplaincy and on the Church colleges and have attempted to chart the thinking and the processes that have gone on in the past. Some objective information about the current chaplains is available through public sources such as college prospectuses and Crockfords Clerical Dictionary and also from the chaplains themselves. I have had access to a number of most helpful confidential documents and many people, not least the chaplains, have been most generous with their time and thoughts. It would have been very useful to have had the added ecumenical dimension from the Roman Catholic and the Free Church

colleges but again the time-scale prevented a broader study; this might be tackled at a later stage.

As the total number of colleges is only thirteen (for the list see Appendix 1), and each has a number of special features which are known to most people in the Church college world, complete anonymity is virtually impossible. However I have not named any colleges or individuals within colleges in this report and I trust that by adopting such an approach an acceptable level of confidentiality has been maintained.

Inevitably a report such as this tends to highlight shortcomings, problem areas and possibilities for development and action; indeed if it does not, either there was no need for the area to have been investigated or the author is being unhelpfully bland. In the light of this, two issues need stating clearly. First, that the great difficulties and constraints under which principals, chaplains and staff are presently working are fully recognised and appreciated and their corporate ability and determination to achieve what they are achieving must demand massive admiration. In such a context to have advice shouted by a non-participant from the touch-line may well cause some irritation. Second, when events are outlined in summary form and attempts made to fit them into an explanatory framework, the impression can sometimes be created of either a grand conspiracy or of a rational and detailed master plan that those working in the field know was not the case. In practice I believe the explanatory process that best fits the events is not that of conspiracy or grand design but rather that of incremental drift - we are not readily clear about where we are going until we get there. Studies within the field of higher education organisation and management have frequently highlighted this preoccupation with structure and process and the corresponding neglect of purpose.

The report begins by tracing the changing styles of chaplaincy in Church colleges and concentrates on the period after 1944. The review of the colleges in 1965 is seen as an important land-mark both in assessing attitudes and in validating future changes. The existing position within the colleges is examined at a factual level making considerable use of public documents such as college prospectuses. Reasons for the rise of the pastoral chaplain and the demise of the teaching chaplain are examined and some of the pros and cons of each type of chaplaincy are assessed. Focus is then put on the relationship between the chaplain and the religious foundation of the college and at a practical level the relationships between the chaplain, the principal and the trustee governors are

highlighted. Finally some conclusions are drawn and suggestions for discussion and action are outlined.

## 2. CHANGING STYLES OF CHAPLAINCY

### 2.1 Early History

Prior to the Second World War the principals of the men's colleges, along with a proportion of the academic staff, were invariably in orders and so the chaplaincy was essentially a shared exercise. In the women's colleges where the principal, although not in orders, nevertheless assumed the role of an abbess in a large monastic foundation, the chaplain was there essentially to perform the priestly ceremonial. In all cases the principal was responsible for the religious as well as the secular life of the college.

After the Second World War the men's colleges began to appoint lay principals and so the question of chaplaincy became more critical. The chaplain's and the deputy principal's roles were occasionally merged and failing that a triumvirate was often established of principal, deputy principal and chaplain with the chaplain frequently being the head of the divinity department: in all cases the chaplaincy was essentially located within the college hierarchy. Chaplains sometimes moved on to become principals, recent examples being Gibbs of Keswick Hall and Buckmaster of St. Peter's, Saltley. The established order of the pre-war college although partially reinstated after the war was never fully restored and by the end of the 1950's major changes were beginning to take place.

### 2.2 The review of the colleges in 1965

In 1964 a working party was established to undertake a survey of all the Church colleges. It consisted of twelve members under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Salisbury and was established jointly by the Church Assembly Board of Education and the Council of the Church Colleges of Education. Splitting into two groups they visited all the Church colleges staying between two and three days in each college. They opted for an 'impression' rather than a statistical approach to their analysis and presented their conclusions in January 1966 in The Report of the Working Party on the Communication of the Christian Faith.

Inevitably many of the assumptions and much of the context of the report have a somewhat dated ring to them now. This was the time when the old maternalism or paternalism of the colleges was giving way under student pressure and college expansion programmes. Nevertheless the report remains important for three reasons. First, it was addressing a perennial problem which faces the Church colleges, namely how to successfully adapt to changing needs and contexts while at the same time retaining the colleges' foundation objectives. Second, it was looking at the role of the chaplain within the total framework of the college's work. Third, a number of its specific recommendations have been influential in practice.

The first section of the report looks generally at the life of the college as a Christian community and emphasises the importance of a holistic style:-

"The Christian Gospel is assimilated by the student from the social life and the curriculum within which he lives and works as well as from the formal lectures on Divinity and the worship in chapel. The education of the student is affected by the whole texture of college life" (p10).

The report goes on to underline that the desired style of community does not come about automatically but rather requires a conscious effort to create and maintain it:-

"In the past it has been assumed that Church foundations would generate Christian community spontaneously. For obvious reasons this is no longer true; the preservation of a distinctively Christian quality of life requires continual effort and imagination" (p14).

The report is quite clear that the responsibility for this quality of life should be a corporate one shared among the majority of the staff:-

"The day is also past when those inside a college could assume that its "religious" life was the responsibility of the chaplain or principal or the Divinity department... the ability of a college to communicate the Gospel to its members depends on the quality of its life as a whole; this quality can only be created by the enthusiastic participation of a majority of its members, particularly the staff... The religious life of the community is a direct function of the conscious participation in planning and action by the staff as a whole" (p14).

This message is reinforced under the section on the recruitment of staff and the report stresses that "the Church affiliation of the college will be purely nominal unless a majority of the staff are not just sympathetic but positively enthusiastic about its distinctive aims" (p15). Especially highlighted are those who hold positions of great influence in the college and the report feels that such persons ought to be committed to the Christian faith: "In particular it seems to us quite essential that principals should be men and women who are deeply and sincerely concerned about the religious life of the college" (p15).

A little later in this section of the report they again return to the idea of a shared ministry:-

"What we are suggesting is that aspects of the life of the college which have in the past been the heavy responsibility of the chaplain and perhaps the principal alone, should now be shared, and should be seen to be shared, by the whole staff" (p16).

It is against this background of a ministry shared by the whole staff that the more specific discussion of the chaplain's role needs to be set, for this was the assumption of the working party. The report argues for a switch of emphasis away from the teaching chaplain model to that of the pastoral chaplain.

The working party found that most of the chaplains and principals were convinced that the chaplains ought to be primarily lecturers if they were to retain an adequate field of action, academic status and respect which ensures a professional relationship with the rest of the staff. It was felt that teaching gives them a ready-made contact with students on neutral ground (p28). However, the working party discovered that the students tend to prefer the idea of a non-academic pastoral chaplain and the general feeling within the working party was that the pastoral side was being too little emphasised, especially in view of the growth in size of the college communities. They suggest a variety of styles of chaplaincy, depending upon the type of college, varying from a chaplain/lecturer who has a minimal teaching commitment to a part-time chaplain with some non-college duties.

The question of tenure is examined and they are clear that chaplains should only be appointed for a limited term, possibly five years, and that this should not normally be extended. If the chaplain is on the teaching staff of a college which also has several other clerics on its staff, then this system works

reasonably easily - the chaplaincy is handed on from one cleric to the next and the out-going chaplain remains at his teaching post. However, the report does not really answer the question of what to do with a non-tenured pastoral chaplain when his term of office comes to an end, and the only suggestions made are either moving to another college or throwing the responsibility back to the diocese.

Whatever type of chaplain is appointed, the working party was clear about three points. First, under no circumstances should the chaplain have any part in the final assessment of students. Second, he should not be the head of the department of divinity, and third, he ought to live in college or within easy reach of it - "his accessibility is essential" (p29).

In keeping with their holistic view of college life, the working party argues that the chaplain should share his clerical ministry with other ordained members of staff:-

"If, as we believe, it is desirable that the whole staff, clerical and lay, should work together as a team, sharing in the total ministry to the college, the ordained members of staff should themselves take a lead and share the clerical function as a group ministry" (p29).

In conclusion, therefore, it can be seen that the working party placed a crucial imprimatur on the concept of a pastoral as opposed to a teaching chaplain. However, the context within which the pastoral chaplain would work was assumed to be a Christian community with a holistic ministry shared among ordained colleagues and the majority of the lay staff with especially strong support coming from those in the most senior positions.

### 2.3 The late 1960's

The latter part of the 1960's saw significant discussion about the chaplain's role in the Church college and an essential focus of this discussion was the annual Chaplains' Conference, records of which are still available. The summary of the 1968 Conference included references to:-

"The sharing of the whole pastoral work by principal, staff and students, particularly in a Church college".

"The key role of the principal as Pastor".

"The way in which the chaplain's function depends on his status, personality

and community characteristics of the college".

"The balance between chaplaincy and lecturing".

"The desire for a conference which combined chaplains and principals".

The record of the 1970 Conference included a more detailed account. Evident from this was a feeling among some chaplains that they were being edged into a marginal position within their college. Others however still felt they occupied the central stage. As in 1968, stress was laid on the sharing of ministry between chaplain, clergy, lay staff and students. Concern was expressed about devising means whereby chaplains were not only accessible but also seen to be so.

A whole section of the 1970 Report focussed on the emerging patterns of chaplaincy and particularly on the debate as to whether to switch from teaching to pastoral chaplaincies in the light of the decision by one college to do just that. The colleges officer, Canon James Robertson, urged the colleges not to be doctrinaire in their approach and to look carefully at the needs of their communities and then to decide a policy in the light of these needs. Some existing experiments were listed to show the range of possibilities, including a team chaplaincy at Exeter, the use of assistant chaplains and the role of a chaplain in giving leadership to a group of staff on a broad-based 'contemporary studies' type of course.

#### 2.4 The 1970's

The intensity of discussion on the chaplaincy issues seemed to fade away with the onset of the 1970's. No doubt there are a number of reasons for this but two stand out. The first undoubtedly was the developing preoccupation with external changes and threats beginning with the James Report of 1971. This continued through the 'massacre' of the colleges in the mid 1970's, the frenzy of creating new diversified courses and revamped versions of existing courses for new validating bodies, the threats to recruitment and finally the financial cutbacks. All these time-absorbing activities allowed little room for other considerations.

The second reason for the reduced discussion about chaplaincy issues is related to a shift in emphasis within the central liaison machinery of the Church colleges. When Canon Robertson left in 1973 to become General Secretary of USPG the concern for the religious dimension of the Church colleges moved to a

more marginal position. This was not the result of a conscious policy decision, but rather a by-product of two circumstances. First, the main function of the colleges officer became to assist the colleges respond to the external changes and threats. Thus a former chief education officer was appointed although his tenure of office was brief owing to a series of illnesses. As a stopgap measure during these illnesses a college principal stepped in and finally the present colleges officer was appointed. As none of the three was ordained it was inevitable that the chaplaincy issue became less dominant: lay officers are frequently reluctant to appear to be telling clergy how to do their jobs! Coincidental with these changes, the new chaplaincies officer appointed in 1974 to co-ordinate all chaplaincy work in higher education happened to be a former Church college chaplain and so naturally this area of the Church colleges' concern tended to gravitate towards him. When he left in 1980 his successor continued to have the Church college chaplains as part of his brief. Thus the result of these two circumstances was that chaplaincy in Church colleges tended to be viewed less as a specific concern of the Church college per se and more of a general concern of the Church's provision of ministry to higher education as a whole.

By 1972 the Church college chaplains had ceased to meet as a separate group although they were invited to the general conference of higher education chaplains and several did in fact attend these conferences. It was not until 1980 that a small group of Anglican college chaplains was convened for a residential conference to consider a recent publication about Church colleges. Subsequently the college chaplains have begun to hold a separate twenty four hour consultation as an adjunct to the annual conference of higher education chaplains and also in December 1982 was held the first of what is anticipated to be a series of one day consultations for the Church college chaplains.

### 2.5 The chaplains of 1983

Each of the thirteen colleges has an officially designated chaplain and it is with this group of chaplains that the following analysis is concerned. Two of the amalgamated colleges have a site or associate chaplain in addition to the main college chaplain but these extra posts have been excluded from the immediate analysis.

While it is beyond the intention of this paper to present detailed profiles of the existing chaplains, certain items of factual information may help the present

analysis. In terms of age the large majority (9) are in their mid thirties to mid forties. Two have just touched thirty and two are in their mid fifties. All of them are university graduates, nine have second degrees and two have PhDs in addition.

Six of them came to chaplaincy work straight from a first curacy but of these four were ordained in their late twenties or mid thirties. Only three of them have been in their present chaplaincy post more than five years and one of these is about to leave; the other two have been in post for seven and eighteen years respectively. One person, although recently appointed to his present post had been chaplain of another Church college for ten years previously. By contrast five of the chaplains have been in post for less than two years.

In terms of how the chaplains are paid, information is available for twelve of the colleges. Four of these pay their chaplains on the Burnham senior lecturer scale while the remaining eight are paid a diocesan incumbent's salary. The sources of income are varied and a certain reticence within college administrations about revealing precise amounts from each source was detected and respected. Where the chaplain is on the academic strength of the college then funding would normally come through DES channels. Where, however, the chaplain is on a diocesan incumbent's scale, a mixed economy operates. Two colleges pay entirely out of private funds, three have persuaded their respective dioceses to foot the whole bill and two get most of the salary through their dioceses although they top up from private funds. Accommodation is normally provided by the college and various additions such as free meals in term time, entertainment and residential allowances may be available.

In terms of teaching, only one chaplain now has a 50% teaching commitment another 25% and a third about 15%. All the rest do either no formal teaching or a little on a voluntary basis. A mere two chaplains have long-term tenure in their colleges and both these are by virtue of their teaching functions.

The site or associate chaplains of the two amalgamated colleges are more typical of the old style of chaplaincy. Both are over their mid forties and are paid on the Burnham scale. One teaches a 75% timetable in the religious studies department as a senior lecturer and the other holds a major post in academic administration as a principal lecturer.

From the preceding analysis it can be seen that the short-term pastoral chaplain has now become the norm in the colleges.

### 3. HOW DO THE COLLEGES PRESENT THE CHAPLAINCY?

A prospectus is a recruiting document, a policy statement and a public relations handout. It strives to speak to students, schools, the educational world and the Church. It attempts to relate what happens in practice to what it feels prospective students will be attracted by and what the educational world and the Church feel the college ought to be doing in theory. The prospectus therefore is an extremely useful document for assessing how the college presents itself to its clientele and also to the outside world.

A careful content analysis of the latest prospectuses from twelve colleges was undertaken by a colleague who had previous experience of this type of work but no detailed personal knowledge of the individual colleges: this personal detachment was felt to be necessary. She also looked at the prospectuses from the mid 1970's and earlier in order to assess changes in approach.

#### 3.1 The place of the chaplain in the staff list

Where the chaplain appears in the prospectus staff list is an important clue as to how the institution wishes to present the importance or otherwise of his role. The traditional picture was of a hierarchical pyramid moving down through principal, deputy principal and chaplain to the rest of the staff. Five of the twelve Church colleges still present the chaplain as closely linked to the senior academic management of the college and two continue the traditional listing with the chaplain third in line. In a third college the chaplain is ousted into fifth place by two deans of students, a fourth (perhaps because of its ecumenical nature) intrudes a head of R.E. between the principal, senior tutor and the chaplain and a fifth places the chaplain immediately after a seven person directorate. In a further two colleges the position is slightly ambivalent. The chaplain appears on the same page as the hierarchy including the chairman of governors suggesting high status, but strategic gaps and one or two other posts also listed temper the accolade.

Two colleges neatly avoid the issue, one by not having a staff list in the prospectus and the other by listing all staff apart from principal and deputy principal in alphabetical order and giving designations alongside. The remaining

three colleges manage to convey an impression of a chaplain who is ancillary to their main activities. One of these colleges lists a hierarchy of six, then all the members of the academic subject departments and finally the chaplain. Another places the chaplain right at the end of two pages of staff and a further college puts the chaplain in a list of staff with general institutional responsibilities positioning him between the catering officer and the staff of the learning resources centre.

Anyone looking at the staff lists of the first five institutions would see the chaplain as an important figure whereas in the other institutions they would be much less sure of his significance. While it may not worry the chaplain himself as to where he is placed and indeed there are strong Christian precedents for taking the seat at the bottom of the table, nevertheless colleges are hierarchical institutions and the significance of roles is judged partly by the 'in-line' position. A review of former prospectuses shows that the last ten years has seen an overall shift in the chaplain's position down the line. An interesting counter movement has been the upward rise of the dean of students who seems to have taken over both some of the functions and the status of the chaplain.

### 3.2 What is said about the chaplaincy?

The twelve prospectuses show a considerable range of approach in what they say about chaplaincy and how they say it. At one extreme two colleges submerge chaplaincy and the Church foundation in an introductory section about the general college facilities and one of them manages to dispose of the issue in four lines. Four colleges place the information about chaplaincy firmly under the heading of 'student services' among facilities such as the library, the campus bank and various counselling services. This would be the normal position for chaplaincy information to be placed in the prospectuses of secular institutions.

The remaining six colleges still convey an impression that the chaplaincy is important. Three of them give over a page to details of the religious life in college and of the chapel facilities. However a comparison over the last ten years reveals that even those who still present chaplaincy as a central feature do so in less positive terms now than in the past.

### 3.3 The visual picture of chaplaincy

One welcome result of the increase in competition for students has been the brightening up of the college prospectuses and the use of photographs to present a picture of student life. Indeed in some prospectuses the visual has come to be as important as the written. But not all aspects of college life lend themselves equally well to visual portrayal. How then does the chaplaincy come through?

Until recently most colleges were content to present the architectural glories of the chapel itself. As long as most of the other pictures were devoid of people that was acceptable, but a review of the prospectuses in the mid 1970's revealed that most of the colleges still presented an empty chapel interior when the majority of the other photographs were peopled.

What of the current position? Of the twelve college prospectuses reviewed, four had no pictures at all relating to chaplaincy, four showed services in progress, one a recorder group practising and two concentrated on the modern architectural and artistic features of the chapel. Only one college moved beyond the chapel building itself to the wider work of chaplaincy among students and staff and included a picture of a cleric talking informally with students in one of the hostel bed-sits. One might have expected the cleric to have been the college chaplain but clearly the temptation to use the scoop picture of the Archbishop was too great! The relationship between text and photographs is also an important factor in presenting an overall impression and there was one unfortunate juxtaposition of information about the chapel placed immediately above a picture of a flourishing canoe club activity.

Clearly there has been a welcome move within five colleges away from pictorially associating the chaplain with an empty chapel building towards associating him with people. However, in a further four colleges the move has been in the opposite direction ignoring the chaplaincy altogether. Furthermore it is surprising that the wider chaplaincy work within the college as a whole is not given more photographic recognition. Prospective students looking at pictures within the prospectuses are unlikely to feel that chaplaincy is a dynamic and central activity within most of the colleges.

### 3.4 Chaplaincy in the prospectus: a conclusion

At one extreme, one college by presenting four lines about chaplaincy and the religious foundation at the end of a paragraph within a section looking at the college community and its facilities, coupled with no photographs of the chapel and placing the chaplain firmly within the student services department, clearly states that the chaplaincy is marginal to the main life and activities of the college. At the other end however there are prospectuses which could not be read without becoming aware of the importance of chaplaincy both to the college and to its clientele. However, the overall picture suggests that most colleges have become somewhat less than sure that chaplaincy will be a strong selling point among potential students.

## 4. THE RISE OF THE PASTORAL CHAPLAIN

The fact that colleges have been moving over to pastoral chaplains is indisputable and among two that still retain teaching chaplains there is strong pressure to change. Why colleges have been moving over to pastoral chaplains is less easy to discern for there has been remarkably little public discussion outside of the individual colleges. No policy or discussion documents have been published and neither of the last two chaplaincies officers can pinpoint any concerted consultations on the issue. Even within some of the colleges themselves, if oral evidence can be relied upon, discussion and debate was restricted and decisions were taken largely at senior management and governor levels rather than as a result of broad-based college consultation.

Some of the reasons for the change over to pastoral chaplains are not difficult to surmise although the appropriate weightings given to them can only be guessed at and would vary from college to college. What follows is intended as no more than a check list although I have ventured to include a number of personal assessments. The points are not necessarily listed in order of importance.

1. The 1970's have seen the slack in the allocation of teaching posts disappear. While a teaching chaplain in a small college with a 50% or 75% teaching load in the 1960's could be easily absorbed into the academic staffing establishment, today the position is very different. Every college has had to make staff redundant in order to cut numbers and to create new posts for diversified courses and changing emphasises within existing courses. Therefore the

annexing of the chaplaincy to a teaching post has become increasingly problematic.

2. Coupled with the above, is the issue of financial expediency. Pastoral chaplains can be paid on an incumbency scale and financial responsibility moved either to private funds or outside of the college altogether to the diocese and the Church Commissioners. Therefore there have been strong financial incentives for having pastoral chaplains.

I would suggest that a combination of pressure on the existing teaching posts coupled with the attraction of an externally funded chaplain has been the most significant motivator of the move to pastoral chaplains.

3. As colleges grew in size so a chaplain with a 75% teaching load could not get to know all the students. Therefore it was necessary for him to be freed from some of the time-consuming academic activities in order to become more accessible to students.

4. As colleges became more complex institutions so teaching became more specialised. This has had two consequences. First, the old unity of purpose focussing on teacher training has disappeared. The chaplains used to be able to make a contribution through education and professional courses or through foundation courses which brought them into contact with a large majority of students. This is much more difficult now and so a teaching chaplain is in danger of working within a small academic ghetto. Second, the validating bodies have become much more critical of staff qualifications and so it becomes more difficult to integrate a chaplain into a course programme and indeed the chaplain may not have the necessary qualifications to teach the course.

5. Pastoral chaplains can be more easily placed on fixed-term contracts rather than being protected by academic tenure, even though this latter is now being challenged and eroded. As a result there is less chance of a pastoral chaplain running out of steam or of a college being saddled with an interview mistake for many years ahead. The concept of 'new blood' young chaplains making a rapid impact on the student body with whom they are more closely allied in age and experience is a frequently painted picture. Certainly the spectre of a chaplain staying for life is one that has worried principals.

6. Teaching chaplains may become distanced from students as a result of the teacher-student relationship and such hazards as course assessment problems causing the chaplain to be seen as an authority figure. A pastoral chaplain becomes more acceptable to students as he is not involved in the academic/disciplinary/professional side of their lives.

7. A pastoral chaplain, because he is not employed directly by the institution, is seen as being in a better position to challenge and act in a prophetic manner vis-à-vis the institution.

8. A pastoral chaplain is more in line with the general style of chaplaincy work within higher education. Thus Church colleges are not seen as being out on a limb.

9. Because the pastoral chaplain may well be employed by the diocese he will be seen as more centrally part of the Church.

10. Because of the short-term tenure and marginal position of the pastoral chaplain he is unlikely to become a threat to the senior managements of the colleges and particularly to the principals all of whom are now lay (and men).

##### 5. THE DEMISE OF THE TEACHING CHAPLAIN

Why has the idea of a teaching chaplain fallen into disrepute? Some of the reasons have already been advanced implicitly in the discussion as to why the pastoral chaplain has come into favour. However it may be useful to put them together in one block:-

1. He is compromised by his institutional position.
2. He is distanced from the students because of his teaching role.
3. If he is in a subject department he is unlikely to see many students in his teaching work.
4. With the advance of academic specialisation over the last few years it is unlikely that a teaching chaplain would be able to keep up with his subject and devote enough time to his chaplaincy work. Furthermore by attempting to marry the needs of the chaplaincy to specific openings within the teaching programme one may well advertise for someone who does not exist. At best the potential field of candidates is likely to be very narrow.

5. The days of the polymath have gone and specialisation is the order of the day. Therefore a chaplain trying to be both a chaplain and a teacher is likely to find that he can do neither job properly.

6. The teaching chaplain would be located within the academic career structure and might be tempted to use his chaplaincy position to advance his status on the academic scale.

7. A teaching chaplain is expensive. Also because he is paid an academic salary he may find it more difficult to move back into parochial life at a later stage.

8. If he has academic tenure he may be more difficult to move on.

9. He may well be a potential threat to the senior management of the college.

However, there are many who regret the movement away from teaching chaplains and while they recognise the problems involved nevertheless feel that there are significant advantages in having a teaching chaplain. These advantages include:-

1. He will be seen as involved in the main business of the college and as a result will be on an equal professional footing with other staff.

2. Flowing from his involvement in the central concerns of the college he is likely to understand the subtle mechanisms of college life more fully and be in a better position to modify them or challenge them when necessary.

3. He is in the college by right and as part of its main professional purpose and is therefore unlikely to feel marginal.

4. Partly out of force of necessity he is in a much better potential position to develop a team chaplaincy style of working.

5. Particularly if he is able to organise his teaching so that he is not restricted to one small department he will come into contact with a significant number of students whom he might not otherwise meet.

6. He may well be able to go on to a position of college leadership at a later stage following the pattern of some of the earlier chaplains.

7. His salary is not a charge to the Church.

8. He can be placed on a fixed-term contract (eg 5 or 7 years).

## 6. THE CHAPLAIN AND THE RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION OF THE COLLEGE

In order to sharpen the thinking about the relationship between the chaplain and the college's religious foundation it is proposed to take two models of a higher education institution, one from each end of the religious/secular spectrum. At the religious end is the small theological college with a handful of graduate and mainly clerical staff. In this institution the concern for the religious dimension is shared by all staff (and students) and the chaplain's distinctive role will be to organise the worshipping life of the college and perhaps to do slightly more than his share of pastoral counselling. Essentially however he will be working as part of a team and the ultimate responsibility for the religious dimension rests firmly with the principal who is accountable for this as for other dimensions of the college's life directly to the governors.

At the other extreme of the spectrum is a large secular institution into which a chaplain comes as one of a number of enablers and counsellors. The chaplain will be a focus for the Christian presence within the institute and will almost invariably be funded by the Church and not by the institute. He may be able to draw on the active support of some staff members but this would not be guaranteed. If his own skills are appropriate and the internal dynamics of the institution are in his favour, then he may be able to have some influence on the institution as a whole but this would be an added bonus. The head of the institution will have no formal responsibility for the religious dimension and may be positively hostile to it. Within this secular institution the chaplain carves out whatever sphere of influence he is able and he may well find he is in direct competition with other Christian organisations in the student market place.

The Church colleges, for much of their history, were closely identified with the theological college model. The chaplain shared the religious purpose with a team of staff, and the principal carried overall responsibility. In recent years, as the colleges have moved out of their exclusive teacher training role and become part of general higher education, so they have been moving away from the theological college towards the secular institution model. The secularisation of the Church colleges has been charted elsewhere (Gay 1979, Gedge 1974 and Powell 1978). In terms of the higher education pecking order the Church colleges are in the least prestigious third sector and we have no Christian university model in this country upon which to draw (Gay 1981). Therefore it is the secular presuppositions of the university and polytechnic sectors which set the pace, and the Church colleges, in their striving for academic and

professional respectability, frequently find at a practical level it is politic to soft pedal their Church foundation. One interesting illustration of this is seen in the tensions sometimes found within the religious studies departments between the claims of new and often secularising trends within their subject and the more faith-directed expectations of some of the students. The extent to which a religious studies department might legitimately be seen as the intellectual arm of the chaplaincy in a Church college is an important and difficult question.

Opportunities for the Church colleges to share their concerns and interests at the religious as well as the academic and administrative levels have been diminishing. A suggestion made at the Chaplains' Conference in 1970 for a joint conference of principals and chaplains never materialised. The Standing Conference of Principals and Governors, which latterly began to include chaplains and frequently discussed the foundation purposes of the colleges, has now lapsed into abeyance and has been superseded by a similar meeting of principals and governors of voluntary colleges. Indeed this whole movement towards stressing the voluntary nature rather than the Church and religious nature of the colleges is an interesting shift of emphasis in the secular direction. The meetings of the Council of Church College Principals rarely have time for detailed discussion of religious purposes and as recorded earlier, the college chaplains did not meet until the end of the decade. However at the annual Staff Conference the question of purpose has continued to be debated although its members have sometimes doubted whether their corporate voice has been heard.

Part of the reason for this recent sparsity of corporate discussion has been the independence of the individual colleges and the fear of their autonomy being eroded by centralising forces - a fear fuelled by the events surrounding the cuts of the mid 1970's. No doubt discussions have gone on within individual colleges but much of this has not been shared at a wider level.

Essentially therefore we have a paradox: Church colleges are modelling themselves increasingly on secular institutions and yet at the same time remain Church foundations. Inevitably this causes tensions, not least for the chaplains.

Who then is accountable for the religious foundation? One chaplain has recently argued in a paper presented to fellow chaplains that an important function of

his is to remind the college of its foundation and charter documents. But how effectively can a pastoral chaplain on a short-term contract do this, especially if the college has no particular wish to be reminded? The chaplain may rapidly come to feel that he is a voice crying in the wilderness. If colleges are intent on having short-term pastoral chaplains then it seems most unrealistic to expect these chaplains to act as the religious consciences of their colleges. Responsibility for the religious foundation should revert back much more to the principal and senior management team and for this they should be accountable to the trustee governors of the college.

How a Church college defines and interprets the role of the chaplain says a considerable amount about the college views its religious foundation. In his report on a residential meeting of Church college chaplains in 1980, the Revd. Humphrey Taylor (the chaplaincies officer at the time) concluded "a strong chaplaincy is a sign of its college's attitude (towards the religious foundation) as well as an effective implementation of it". In 1973 a member of the Colleges Advisory Group in attempting to draw up criteria for measuring the 'effectiveness of a Church college' suggested that one important criteria was 'the position of the chaplain within the college' (quoted in Alves 1979 p13).

Despite much rhetoric to the contrary, the past ten years have undoubtedly seen a movement of the chaplains towards the margins of their colleges. Earlier sections have attempted to chart this process; the author's personal observations of the scene and many discussions with key participants tend to confirm it; and the Revd. Humphrey Taylor, drawing on his experience as chaplaincies officer, has offered to be quoted as saying that in his view the 1970's saw a systematic marginalisation of the Church college chaplains within their institutions.

## 7. THE CHAPLAIN, THE PRINCIPAL AND THE GOVERNORS

The whole issue of the relationships between the chaplain, the principal and the governors was examined by a group of chaplains in 1980 under the chairmanship of Humphrey Taylor and his report (Taylor 1980) concluded:

"the group became aware of the significance of the relationships of the principal and the chaplain both with each other, and also each with members of the college and also those outside it. It was interesting to recall that early in many colleges' history the principal had been the chaplain, ... One

can then trace what happened as principals came to divest themselves of the chaplain's role and function, along with several others now devolved onto deputies, deans, wardens etc. The relation between principal and chaplain is obviously of cardinal importance to the well-being of a Church college as such".

"What is essential everywhere is careful attention to the structure and the strength of the chaplaincy, both constitutional and numerical. An important aspect of this was seen to be the chaplain's accountability. For his own security and effectiveness this needs to be clear although it cannot be simple. As a member of the college staff he is obviously accountable to the principal. As a priest he is equally clearly accountable to the bishop of the diocese. Because of the college's character and his own responsibilities in relation to it, the chaplain must also bear a more direct and specific relation to its governors than is the case with most other staff. Indeed it is generally in the governing body that the two other lines of the chaplain's accountability intersect".

The model of chaplaincy implied in these comments may be stronger than is in practice becoming the case. Do chaplains feel that they have such a relationship with their governing bodies? Can they go directly to the governing body, by-passing the principal if necessary, as a matter of course? The relationship between principal, chaplain and governing body is a crucial issue.

It is important to identify the various components within the governing body. Normally the bishop of the diocese would be on the governing body and may well be its chairman or visitor. Governing bodies differ in the ways they are composed and titled, but there will always be a group, normally labelled the trustee or foundation governors, who have a clear responsibility for the foundation aims of the institution. It is to the bishop, the chairman (if someone other than the bishop), and this group of trustees that a special line of accountability proceeds. If the chaplain occupies a central enough position within the college and possesses enough personal and institutional authority and power then it is right and proper that he should be held accountable to a significant extent for the foundation aims of his college: an accountability he would share with the principal.

If however the chaplain's position has moved to the margins of the institution

then it is unrealistic and unfair to hold him accountable for a situation he is unable to influence. In this case the overwhelming responsibility must rest with the principal, not the chaplain. But accountability is a two-way process and if those who are the custodians of the foundation do not ask the searching questions, answers are unlikely to be forthcoming. Therefore some of the responsibility inevitably falls on the bishops, chairmen of the governors and the foundation governors for ensuring that the foundation purposes are kept under review, that the people being held accountable are the most appropriate people and that it is realistically possible for these people to stand some chance of carrying out their delegated functions.

#### 8. HOW DO THE CHAPLAINS VIEW THE POSITION?

Undoubtedly there is a considerable anxiety among a number of present and recent past chaplains about their role in a Church college. In two of the colleges which still retain teaching chaplains and in a third which recently redesignated its teaching chaplain as a pastoral one, the respective chaplains and principals have had serious differences of opinion over the style of chaplaincy.

In discussions with a number of pastoral chaplains there has been a strong feeling that where they have undertaken some voluntary teaching this has helped their chaplaincy work and several expressed a view that they would welcome a greater teaching involvement. Furthermore several felt that being out of the academic structure affected adversely their contacts with students. One chaplain commented that many students believed that he was not academically qualified to teach and were surprised to learn that he had a degree! Equally however there was a concern that too heavy a teaching commitment would overload them and that great care was needed in locating teaching in areas which provided the greatest opportunities for broad student contact. The risk of being exclusively located in a small subject department ghetto was well understood.

Several pastoral chaplains expressed an anxiety about their relative impotence in their dealings with the college as an institution. They felt they were too junior, too marginal and too short-term to make an impact on college policy, structure and ways of working. The theory that a pastoral chaplain paid for by the diocese would be in a strong position to apply a prophetic critique to the total institution appears not to be realistic in practice. By the time a

chaplain properly understands how the institution works, builds up his credibility among colleagues and formulates a plan of action he is almost certainly coming to the end of his tenure. It may well be that three or even five year tenures are too short for real effectiveness recognising that some of the time is spent in settling-in and later in looking for a new post. It does seem that while pastoral chaplains are able to do great things with their student clientele, they like their students pass through leaving the institution relatively unaffected. If the Christian Union has cornered the religious market and the chaplain is not readily acceptable to them then he is bound to have moments when he wonders just what he has achieved.

In the 1970's when discussions were in progress for merging, amalgamating and federating Church colleges with other types of institutions attempts were made to establish tangible criteria through which the continuity of the original Church foundation in the new institution would be insured (GS Misc 29 (1974):GS 417 (1979)). Because some of the most important aspects such as college ethos were difficult to define and objectify, the Board of Education fixed on several tangible descriptors such as courses in Christian theology, courses in teacher training and substantial residential provision. One crucial descriptor was the provision of a Church of England priest as a chaplain. Thus the chaplain was used in the thinking and writing of the 1970's as part of the definition of a Church college. Several chaplains were very conscious of this 'reserved' position and one commented on feeling like a mascot who was wheeled out whenever assurances were needed that their institution was still a Church college. Clearly symbols of the Church foundation are important physical indicators and expressions of the total work of the college. Many colleges have come to see chaplains, chapels, Sunday services and the range of other weekday activities in chapel as vital symbols as well as realities. However there is always a danger of a mismatch developing between the symbol and the reality and this is an issue that needs keeping under regular review.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

A fundamental argument in this report has been that chaplaincy and the religious foundation of a Church college needed to be examined together. Therefore assumptions and models taken from chaplaincy work in secular institutions do not automatically apply.

The 1965 working party validated what has become a drift towards short-term

pastoral chaplains but the context assumed by the working party was of a staff actively committed to the religious foundation and prepared to supply colleagues for a corporate approach to chaplaincy. Thus colleges gained 'new blood' chaplains and at the same time the continuity of the religious foundation was safe-guarded through key members of the tenured staff some of whom would form part of the corporate chaplaincy.

If colleges plan to continue the idea of pastoral chaplains, and certainly there are significant arguments in favour, they need to look closely at what can and cannot be expected of such persons. Clearly it is unrealistic to hold a short-term pastoral chaplain in any serious way accountable for the religious foundation. A chaplain, whether he is appointed on a pastoral or a teaching basis, should be seen as one member of a team responsible for the chaplaincy and for the religious foundation. How this team is composed and how the members are designated and organised must vary from college to college according to local circumstances. Components of the team should certainly include:-

1. The principal.
2. A significant proportion of the senior management team.
3. The ordained members of staff.
4. Other appropriate staff.
5. A serious input from the religious studies department.
6. A 'new blood' ordained input - whether in the form of a pastoral chaplain or part-time help from local clergy acting on an 'assistant chaplain' basis.
7. Appropriate student help.

In the final analysis whether a college opts for a teaching chaplain or a pastoral chaplain does not greatly matter. What is much more important is whether the college sees the work as its corporate responsibility or whether it tries to off-load this responsibility onto one person. A chaplain in a Church college, whatever his status, unless he has the active corporate support of senior members of the college, is in danger of becoming little more than a religious token. Such a chaplain may well have a personal impact on some of the students and staff, but almost inevitably his individual scope for influencing the total religious foundation of the college is slight.

The ultimate purpose of this report is to encourage the members of the remaining Church colleges to examine the situation in their own college. To take a single factor approach is to miss the real complexity of human institutions and

communities: a change in one area has a knock-on effect elsewhere. To see pastoral chaplaincies largely as convenient expedients for saving money and academic posts without looking at the broader context is to gain a very narrow and partial impression. Essentially chaplaincy and the religious foundation of the college need to be reviewed on an inter-related basis. Chaplaincy within a Church college ought to be designed in a way that accords with the overall purposes and implementation of the college's religious foundation. Within any one college to attempt to draw up a new style of chaplaincy without first looking at what the college should be about as a Church college is to put things in the wrong order.

The main conclusion of this report is that in recent years within the Church colleges as a whole the position of chaplaincy has become increasingly marginal. Furthermore discussions about appropriate styles of chaplaincy may have become little more than diversionary and cosmetic exercises as they are frequently divorced from detailed considerations of the fundamental purposes of the colleges. The extent to which the chaplain's position is a reflection of the college's attitude towards its foundation purposes and ideals is a question that members of each college might ask of their own institution.

#### Biographical note

The Revd Dr John Gay is Director of the Culham College Institute and a non-stipendiary priest within the parish of Abingdon. He studied social geography, theology and educational administration at Oxford. He worked in Paddington for five years as a curate where he also taught in the local primary school. This was followed by seven years as the chaplain and a lecturer at Culham College of Education and a further two years on the staff of the University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies. He took up his present appointment as founder-Director in 1980.

APPENDIX 1

THE ANGLICAN COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Free-standing institutions

Christ Church, Canterbury  
Trinity, Carmarthen  
St. Paul and St. Mary, Cheltenham  
The College, Chester  
S. Martin's, Lancaster  
Bishop Grosseteste, Lincoln  
St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth  
King Alfred's, Winchester  
Ripon and York St. John

2. Colleges within a federal structure

St. Katharine's, Liverpool:	Liverpool Institute of Higher Education
Whitelands, London:	Roehampton Institute of Higher Education

3. Colleges which have merged with another institution to form a new voluntary institute

Bishop Otter, Chichester:	part of the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education
Bishop Lonsdale, Derby:	part of the Derby Lonsdale Collegé of Higher Education

## APPENDIX 2

### THE CULHAM COLLEGE INSTITUTE

Culham College was founded in 1852 by the Church of England for the education and training of teachers. In 1979, after 127 years of work, the college was closed as an initial training institution. A year later this Institute, which carries forward the College's title, was established by the trustees of the Culham Educational Foundation.

The purpose of the Institute is to investigate the Church's involvement in education with particular reference to the Church of England's role in the statutory system. In practice this means the Institute is largely concerned with Church schools in the state maintained sector, Church independent schools and the Church colleges of higher education. It was felt that there was a need for a research body which was not directly involved in running an institution nor in formulating policy which could stand back and examine both the theoretical and the practical issues.

The Institute is housed in a well equipped set of offices in the centre of Abingdon and has built up a small team of research and support staff. It also has a developing resource centre on Church-related education and it offers a consultancy service to those wishing to undertake research.

### THE CULHAM OCCASIONAL PAPERS

A vital part of the Institute's function is to make available information and ideas to a wide range of people and this will be done in part through a series of occasional papers. Papers so far published are:-

1. Gay J.D. (1979) The Christian Campus? The Role of the English Churches in Higher Education, £3.50.
2. Gay J.D. (1982) The Debate about Church Schools in the Oxford Diocese, 75p.
3. Francis L.J. (1983) The Logic of Education, Theology and the Church School, £1.20.
4. Gay J.D. (1983) Chaplaincy in Church Colleges, £1.80

The cost of each paper includes postage and packing.

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