

# The chapel programs essay sample



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The comment which raised the eyebrows of the chaplains was that “ we were no longer just chaplains. We are Correctional Officers (CO) first, then chaplains.”

This was an explosive statement. The number-one concern, we Chaplains had was how the offenders would take this. There were even some chaplains talking about finding another ministry.

We knew that this would causes great deal of problems with the attendance in our different programs. After a month the chaplains were being told by administration to fill some position that was once the responsibility of the officers. Soon many of the offenders began to see the chaplains acting less and less as their chaplains. There was no debate that the budget cuts had damaged the chaplains, the chapel programs, and the career change, was a politic move. It’s so true that the cuts were needed. However, it was how the cut were carried out.

There’s an old saying “ if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and sounds like a duck, it’s a duck...”

Before the state budget cuts, the chapel would have had at least one Correctional Officer from 8 AM until 5 PM working with the chaplains to maintain security. This was a perfect marriage; the Correctional Officers made the rounds and took care of any security issues. The chaplains would conduct the programs and complete all the chaplain responsibilities.

But after the budget cuts, the Correctional Officers which were posted in the chapel were taken from the chapel. The only time the chapel would have a

Correctional Officer posted was during any large service or program. And after the program there were to return back to their post of the day.

I was told by a captain that there were those in administration that thought there was very little need of a Correctional Officer to be posted in the chapel since there was little happening except for Sunday morning during the major church service where we had 90-110 offenders.

I admit that there many places in the facility that called for more an one Correctional Officer. But to say that there was little need to post one in the chapel, needed to spend time in the chapel. We had fights, heated arguments, chaplains assaulted, weapons hidden, contraband passed from one offender to another, who knows what else.

One Sunday morning when entering the facility, I was told to report to the captain's office ASAP. When entering the captain's office, I heard, " Chaplain Goforth, I need to pull the chapel's Correctional Officer this morning. You will be in control over the security as well as your normal duties on Sunday morning."

I reminded the captain that Sunday Church Services is the largest group the whole week. It would be no surprise if we had 90-110 offenders in church services. "... How am I to maintain safety and security while preaching?

A few days later, I took several days off due to family issues. When I came back to work, I was called to the assistant superintendent's office. I was informed that Chaplain Tom. and I were both being investigated due to a security breach. An offender was using one of the chapel computers to watch

porn. Later a few days later, the administration informed us that the offender had the porn material throw over the fence. Therefore, the charges were dropped. But the issue of an offender using a computer remained an problem.

I once again voiced my concern that the chapel needed to increase security. “ There was no way that the chaplains can perform their normal duties and maintain security. This most likely wouldn’t have happened if we still had a Correctional Officer to monitor the offenders in the chapel. When we had an officer, the chaplains could provide spiritual care without being interrupted.”

The chaplains who were having to maintain the spiritual needs and the work of a Correctional Officer in the chapel were no more walking nor sounding like a duck in the eyes of the offenders; we were the ducks. We were no more operating in the states pure definition of what the chaplain’s role is to be. The chaplains are to be a spiritual guide, a mediator between the administration and the offenders, this was no longer the cause.

#### CHAPLAINS VS. VOLUNTEERS:

Correctional Chaplaincy is a professional discipline, requiring extensive training beyond that of their own faith group. As discussed in the last chapter, The chaplains must have been sufficient working knowledge of divergent faith requirements in order to properly administer the activities of all faith groups. When properly augmented by contract clergy and community resources of other faiths, staff chaplains are highly effective, contributing significantly to the orderly operations of correctional facilities and the rehabilitation of offenders. However, some correctional systems

have recently fallen prey to offers of “ free” chaplains from religious organizations whose agendas are self-centered.

After completing their own survey the California Research Bureau stated, Consequently, religious programs in those places have suffered greatly, and the religious rights of many offenders have been trampled upon. The integrity of religious programs can be best answered by retaining professional correctional chaplains and fully using their. In general, their supervisors disagree.

The California Research Bureau” Chaplain survey respondents agree that there is a need for Correctional Officer-Training with security staff, so that each understands the other’s roles and responsibilities. Reducing conflict with security staff is an important issue for chaplains, because they may be viewed as favoring offenders when trying to resolve minor conflicts that arise between offenders and institutional staff. California Research Bureau.

When reading this, one will ask what else does the Chaplains do other than administration work? The Pew Research Center shares that the 730 chaplains. Across the states reported the following.

#### OTHER ROLES AND ACTIVITIES:

“ Mmentioning other activities on which they spend a significant amount of time. Again the 730 chaplains have voiced that the administration word over rides the work chaplaincy. Take a look at the finding. The finding that both “ Pew Research” discovered.

Administrative tasks 45

Communication between families and inmates 18

Pastoral counseling 17

Coordinate volunteer services 16

Other program managements 12

Visits with inmates 11

Teaching/educational activities 9

Other miscellaneous 23.”

#### PROSELYTIZING:

The same survey called “ Religion in Prisons – “ A 50-State Survey of Prison Chaplains.” conducted by the Pew Research Center out of Washington DC. And between Sept. 21 and Dec. 23, 2011, The Pew Research Center published their findings.

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America. This is one of the most detailed surveys I’ve ever studied. The Pew Research Center asked chaplains throughout the 50 states to respond to this survey. They sent 1, 474 to the chaplain, only to receive 730 back from the chaplains.

“ The act of attempting to convert people to another religion or opinion.

The word proselytize is derived from the Greek language prefix προσ- (pros-, toward) and the verb ἔρχομαι (érchomai, to come) in the form of προσήλυτος (prosélytos, a newcomer). Historically, in the Koine Greek Septuagint and New Testament, the word proselyte denoted a gentile who was considering conversion to Judaism.”

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Should Prohibiting Proselytizing be permitted in a prison? ” Wikipedia Many of the volunteers who come in to work with the chaplains, to provide the offenders spiritual guidance would say that’s what we are here for. You will find this question to be another Hugh challenge esp. for any volunteer and for the chaplains as well.

During the chaplains 2008 conference the American Correctional Chaplaincy Association stated “ As inmates are literally a captive and vulnerable audience, proselytizing is rightfully prohibited in most prisons.