

AN INTRODUCTION TO AIRPORT CHAPLAINCY

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*“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it;
The world and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1)*

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AN INTRODUCTION TO AIRPORT CHAPLAINCY

But first - what *is* Chaplaincy?

When “the Chaplain” is referred to in this document, it should be seen as shorthand for “all Chaplaincy staff”, and inclusive of gender, age, and race.

In Western Europe before the Industrial Revolution, most ministry was based on the parish system, since people lived and worked in the same place – and the Church was present and influential in every locality. It was an agricultural society, and few people travelled very far during their lives.

Over the last two hundred years, however, life has become more complex and is now lived out in differing places for differing purposes. We live in one place, study in another, work in another, and go to hospital in yet another. The fabric of human life has become stretched, and often torn. Human relationships are more difficult to maintain. Families are under strain, and social health suffers.

The Church has sometimes sought to address these changes by appointing ordained and lay Ministers to bring ministry into sectors of life outside the Church – and named it Chaplaincy or Sector Ministry. Today, Chaplaincy provides a servant Christian ministry in what would otherwise be seen as “secular” spheres of life: hospitals; higher education; prisons; the armed forces; the emergency services; sport; retail, land, air and sea transport; and the workplace.

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- ❑ Chaplaincy is one expression of the Christian Church’s desire to participate in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ in His redemption of the world.
- ❑ It is a way of extending the Church’s mission and good news into the contemporary world, without expecting the hearers to leave their own familiar territory in order to receive it. Chaplaincy takes Christian ministry to the places where people live out their lives and find their challenges, hurts, problems, and questions.
- ❑ Chaplaincy results from the belief that “God so loved the world”, not just the Church! (John 3:16, and Psalm 24:1 similarly.) Chaplains serve those they meet in daily life, because it is right to do so – knowing that by serving people they also serve Christ. (Matthew 25:31-40 – see especially verse 40.)
- ❑ It is part of the process of allowing the Kingdom of God to grow in the world. Our task is to further the Kingdom of God in the places where Chaplaincy is offered. This is not always as easy to define within a corporate commercial, operational, educational, or healthcare setting as it is when thinking only of the Kingdom as the rule of God advancing in the

lives of individuals. Chaplaincy ministry nearly always finds itself concerned with both the individual and the corporate.

- ❑ Chaplains believe in the Church’s challenge to be a missionary people in the broader sense - a people with a wide and world-changing task given by God. This as opposed to fulfilling only the more targeted ministry of direct personal evangelism. Chaplaincy focuses especially on availability, confidential listening and support, and service. Yet, of course, Chaplains are ready to offer the Gospel of Christ when the questions are asked.
- ❑ Chaplains will often find themselves living in an uncomfortable “no man’s land” between the Church they represent and the institutions to which and within which they minister. They belong fully to, yet may be understood by, neither. Many in the institutions receiving the ministry will have difficulty grasping the role of Chaplaincy, and many in the Church will see it as a “not proper” ministry. Theologically, this uncomfortable existence is absolutely right! Chaplaincy ministry is encouraging the Church to look beyond its own needs, yet at the same time does not belong to the sector where Chaplaincy is being offered. The Chaplain must be able to live in this in-between world, and see it as the right place to be in order to minister. This extends to being able to live with people’s lack of clarity in understanding the Chaplaincy role, whilst seeing part of that role as educational in each direction.
- ❑ Though of Christian origin and conviction, Chaplaincy is offered to all who will receive it, to people of Christian faith, other-faith, or no faith - no matter what the starting-point. In practice, that starting-point will seldom be an obviously spiritual one, yet the Chaplain assumes a spiritual need exists in all humanity.
- ❑ Chaplains sometimes find that their mission is better understood, and accepted, by committed members of other-faith communities than by many whose background is residually Christian. It is not unusual for conversations with Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, and others to reach a spiritual level somewhat effortlessly – and the Chaplain may find questions and opinions forthcoming. In most sectors where Chaplaincy takes place, inter-faith conversation is welcomed and respect shown for those sharing in it. The Chaplain will sometimes be seen as the “spiritual person” for that community, since leaders of other faiths may not usually be involved in this type of ministry.
- ❑ Chaplaincy is supported by a conviction that the gospel is “holistic – bridging the perceived gap between the so-called ‘secular’ and ‘spiritual’ aspects of life. That still challenges the way most of our institutions work, and the way that many Christians live out their faith.” (Dr John Drane in his preface to “*The McDonaldization of the Church*.”) Chaplaincy is ideally placed to re-connect the secular and the spiritual, moving between the two as it does by its very nature.

- ❑ It takes seriously the ministry of presence and the building of relationships, in a spirit of service. Georgina Nelson, writing of Hospital Chaplaincy in *“Chaplaincy: The Church’s Sector Ministries”* (Ed Giles Legood), says : “Underpinning all else...there is the Chaplain’s most basic calling : to be, to be present, to be himself – the same both professionally and personally, with the integrity which has the potential to free others to be, to be present, to be themselves.” Here is the necessary authority for Chaplains to feel that they do not always have to be *doing!* In this as in all ministry, being is more foundational.
- ❑ Chaplaincy seeks to understand people and their hopes and fears, their aspirations and needs, within the specific setting in which the Chaplain meets them.
- ❑ To offer the ministry that is theirs, Chaplains must be listeners – people who will spend time and effort actively listening to what is being said, and the language and forms in which it is couched. Reading between the lines is an essential craft, as is the ability to concentrate in such a way that the person being listened to knows he or she is being heard and understood. Whilst all this is going on, the Chaplain needs to be able to assess his/her own inner reactions to what he or she is being told, and at the right moments to allow silence, or to reflect back. The only item on the agenda is the need of the person being heard.
- ❑ A questionnaire to police officers asked what qualities a Police Chaplain should have. The responses favoured the following list, and these would apply equally to chaplains in all sectors : “listening skills, human sensitivity, personal knowledge, availability, confidentiality, diplomacy and discretion, common sense, realism and pragmatism, objectivity, experience of working with people, and a non-judgmental and non-patronising attitude”. (From Richard Armitage, *“Police Chaplaincy – Servant to the Service”*.) It may not need mentioning, of course, but the list is incomplete without the strength and conviction of personal Christian faith. Without that, Chaplains have no more to offer than a humanist listener or counsellor.

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Airport Chaplaincy – some initial points

Airport Chaplaincy focuses on both those who *work* at the Airport, and those who *travel* through it. As does the parable of the Prodigal Son, Airport Chaplaincy deals with a traveller, a worker, and a loving Father who wishes both of them to know the depth of His faithful love.

Airport Chaplaincy attempts to understand the issues and practices which affect employees for good or ill at the Airport, and it therefore works on two simultaneous levels – the individual and the corporate. At heart, the vision encompasses God and

the employee, the company worked for, and the whole Airport community in its interconnected life.

Finding the most appropriate ways of giving “concrete” expression to this Kingdom-vision is one of the greatest and most continual of challenges for Chaplaincy staff.

Airport Chaplaincy is perhaps the one agency that can look on the Airport non-commercially - and see one community, one multi-faceted civil aviation industry, one human endeavour, one work product – and all for the sake of the passenger’s journey, or the cargo’s shipment. For this reason, it is vital that Airport Chaplains come to understand how the airline engineer’s work relates to the flight despatcher’s, or the air traffic controller’s to the aircraft captain’s, or the ground handling agent’s passenger services duty manager’s to the security search team leader’s.

This ability to grasp the nature of the Airport’s life and work feeds and informs the worship and the work of the Airport Chaplaincy. Without the willingness and enthusiasm of Chaplaincy staff to enter into the Airport’s daily operational life, yet remain a little apart from it, the ministry will have no claim to be taken seriously.

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Airport Chaplaincy to Employees

- ❑ All the aims of Chaplaincy ministry referred to in the Introduction apply in terms of ministry to employees. The Chaplain has the Kingdom to represent, the Gospel to live out and offer, and a Christian presence and personality through which to offer it.
- ❑ In order to be in any way effective, the Chaplain must become known by and must attempt to get to know, the employees working on site. This will always seem a daunting task – for the Airport and its resident companies may employ many thousands of people. Without the Chaplaincy being known, however, little real ministry can be offered.
- ❑ This knowing and being known takes time, and is the result of a gradual building of pastoral relationships. As valuable as it is for the Chaplain to know the employees, even more valuable are the opportunities for the employees to know the Chaplain. These need creating on a daily (or sessional, where the ministry is part-time) basis.
- ❑ Chaplaincy ministry to employees on the airport site is earthed in regular workplace visiting. This helps the Chaplain to see and understand employees in context, to gain insight into the issues facing them, and to show interest in and support for their work. That does not mean it will be right or convenient to have long conversations with everyone at all times! Employees are there to work, primarily – and the Chaplain is sensitive to that. Airport Chaplains also listen to and support individuals outside of their

work hours, seek contacts with management and workforce representatives, and may learn much on occasion through attendance by invitation at key meetings of both managers and unions.

- ❑ Many and various are the practical ways in which these pastoral relationships can be built. Spending time with people in shadowing their work for a session is one valuable way of coming to understand both the employee, the job, and the company.
- ❑ Airport Chaplaincy to employees, where it becomes accepted and valued, will inevitably lead to requests for deeper pastoral involvement in some cases. As relationships are built over time – based on integrity and trust, the Chaplain will begin to be asked to make home or hospital visits at times of crisis or illness, and may also be asked to conduct family funerals and / or weddings. Deciding on where to draw the line of pastoral responsibility is never easy. Should all workplace chaplaincy confine itself to the employee viz-a-viz the workplace, or is it in the very nature of Christian ministry that wider pastoral opportunities be taken up whenever they present themselves?
- ❑ We cannot leave this section without reference to one difficult area. Any Workplace Chaplaincy is led occasionally into the discomfort of what might be called a prophetic ministry. In order to affirm and encourage employees at all levels in their work, corporate values, practices, and decisions as they affect employees may need challenging in the name of justice – or even simply health and safety. Accordingly, the Airport Chaplain may find him or herself in the role of questioner from time to time. This is a constructive role *provided the relationships have already been built*. Such prophetic ministry must also be exercised within a clear understanding of the Chaplain's continuing pastoral support for everyone involved at a personal level - come what may. Then, in a useful way, the Chaplain may even at times become the "conscience" of the business. The role models here are the Old Testament prophets. Whatever they may have had to say to Israel at times, it was all done within the scope of their love for the nation – and the priority of their calling.

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Airport Chaplaincy and the Traveller

- ❑ Chaplaincy ministry to passengers is very different to that which we offer to employees. Ministry to passengers and visitors must be looked on more as a "ministry of the moment". But it is no less real for that, and should be taken seriously by the Chaplain. We cannot know what the effects of a short conversation, a cheery welcome, or the answering of a basic question requiring information may be.

- ❑ The Airport Chaplain "walks the passenger terminal" as a regular part of the ministry, but at times without a great deal of specific passenger-contact. On days when this happens, it must not be seen as failure. (One Airport Chaplain used to describe two categories of days in his experience – "talking days" and "non-talking days".) Provided that Chaplaincy staff are in some way clearly identified to any who may wish to speak with them, passengers and visitors do have the right not to use the Chaplaincy service! Nothing is ever lost by walking the terminal, however, since the many staff working there will have seen the Chaplain around, and the presence of Chaplaincy at the Airport has been more noticed by passengers than might be thought. The Chaplain's prayer is then that such observations by passengers will lead to them seeking Christian ministry at some future point.
- ❑ On occasions, the Chaplain may be called out by the Airport, an airline, or by ground handling agent staff to meet specific passenger or visitor needs. Callout may arise from illness or death in the terminal or during flight, any specific request to see a Chaplain, distressed or confused people, the expected arrival of bereaved passengers, or families to meet them, the arrival of human remains by air, and (very occasionally) fearful flyers. This last category is a common one, yet seldom are such distressing and often emotionally-crippling needs made obvious enough for staff to call the Chaplain in to help.
- ❑ If the Airport is one that has flights to regular spiritual pilgrimage destinations, then there may be considerably more contact with passengers at those times. The Chaplaincy may become quite involved in both spiritual and operational support to passengers, tour operator representatives, and Airport staff working with that flight.
- ❑ The Chaplaincy ministry to those passing through the Airport is greatly strengthened if the Airport operator has the foresight to provide a Chapel or Prayer Room. Such places become oases of peace and reflection for both passengers and staff - amidst the stress, noise and bustle of the terminal building and operational areas. The Chaplaincy usually cares for the Chapel, and extends its ministry by placing suitable literature and prayers for people to take away, as well as providing facilities that may be used by worshippers from any of the world faiths.
- ❑ The ministry of the Chapel or Prayer Room to individuals should not be underestimated. Airports are places to which people come with mixed emotions, and for a variety of reasons. The sadness of a long-dreaded parting (perhaps with the prospect of years before a reunion), or the stress of a difficult greeting are just two of the more negative emotions seen at an airport. At the other end of the scale is the joy of reunion with loved ones. Whatever the situation, Airports often draw the emotions and the Chapel will quite frequently receive visitors who have much to reflect on or pray about. Major life-changing decisions may be made there, not least that of the challenge to find and follow God's will. The depth of feelings aroused

by the Airport experience, and the reasons for being there, can often be seen reflected in the nature of prayer requests left at the Chapel.

- ❑ Once an Airport Chapel is provided, the opportunity also arises for regular services to be held on whatever basis is found to be suitable. It is strongly desirable for these to be announced over the terminal public address system, and also advertised in other ways so that both passengers and staff can attend. Services should be brief enough for staff on short breaks and passengers with forthcoming departure schedules to be able to share in. In this way, the traveller’s spiritual needs are catered for by the Chaplaincy in just the same way as his or her practical needs are fulfilled by the retailers and caterers in the terminal. Contacts with passengers before or after services can lead to useful personal ministry to the traveller. Some national occasions of Remembrance may call for the Chaplain to personally use the public address system to lead into (and out of) the minute’s silence.
- ❑ Larger airports will see a number of asylum seekers and HM Immigration detainees. Detention Centres may exist on the Airport site, or short-term holding areas in the terminal building. Based very much on the Old Testament notion of hospitality to those who are alien among the community, there is a Chaplaincy role to such travellers – who may well find themselves travelling back in a short space of time, or at best sent on to a longer-term centre of detention. One large Airport Chaplaincy holds a weekday informal prayer and Bible study in the Detention Centre for those who want to be present, another visits a large area centre near the Airport to hold regular services, and yet a third visits pastorally. Take-up for such Chaplaincy ministry will vary partly with the prevailing culture and religious background of the asylum seeker patterns at each airport.
- ❑ Chaplaincy to the Traveller is important. It grows out of a biblical conviction about hospitality and making the stranger welcome. But the percentage of the Chaplain’s time spent on it will vary with the size and character of each airport. Ministry to staff will be the main focus of the Chaplain’s efforts at a smaller airport, where the Chaplain knows and is known. At the large international airport hubs the reverse is true. Here it is almost impossible to get to know all the companies or their staffs, or to cover the airport site with workplace visiting. Ministry must be more selective, and that often means developing the ministry to passengers – with special concern for detainees, those in various kinds of need, and being around for the main passenger throughput peaks. More time is likely to be spent walking the terminals, and getting to know key staff who can open doors of opportunity for the Chaplaincy.

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“Pastoral Conversation within Airport Chaplaincy”

Based on a document by Captain Brian Griffin, Salvation Army – written for the London Luton Airport Chaplaincy Team

[Brian is seconded as a Workplace Chaplain]

Where conversation is with people who are at work, the Chaplain will want to remain aware of that fact – and not seek to prolong conversation too far. Where it is with departing passengers, then an awareness of their flight schedule is appreciated! There will, though, be those times when delayed passengers will be only too happy to talk for a while, or staff will be on a break or between periods of activity.

The nature and purpose of conversations with airport-based staff and aircrew on the one hand, and passengers passing through on the other, are quite different. Chaplains will develop different ways of initiating conversation with each.

It may not be a natural gift for all those involved in Sector Ministry / Chaplaincy to be able to readily converse at levels beyond the everyday. Yet, as servants of Christ, we shall desire when the opportunity is right to be able to move conversation deeper since we represent the spiritual. We have a Gospel to which our lives, service and on occasion our words point. How much pointing can be done will depend entirely on the circumstances, but as Chaplains (as with all Christians) we should be keenly ready to take opportunities that present themselves to witness to our faith or to answer spiritual questions.

Moving back a stage, Brian Griffin points out the importance of people being able to respond easily to our initial approach – even to our giving thought about the physical direction of approach: i.e. not approaching directly as if to confront, but obliquely. Brian believes that this is least likely to set up any defensiveness.

Facial expression is also important. An open face – with a ready smile – will win friends and receptivity. We need to be aware of how we “come across” to people – and facial expression is part of that, as is the way we speak to people. Indeed, it may be the simple smile to someone as we walk slowly by that receives a response inviting an initial word or two. But the Chaplain must also know when that response has not been received!

Where people are standing or sitting together as a group, initial conversation might be with one who stands out as a “leader” or focal point within that group, but then gradually spread out to involve everyone. The conversation must be developed in such a way that those we are talking with can signal an end to it when they feel it right – and the Chaplain must be aware when that moment has been reached.

With passengers, there are often “hooks” to be found on which to hang a conversation – tired-looking children, bored-looking teenagers, frustrated-looking adults, passengers looking lost, people travelling on their own, or disabled people who appear to have been left alone for a while by busy airport staff.

“Hooks” are also needed in conversations with airport-based staff. In building these relationships with staff, Brian Griffin makes the point that “the relationship and the conversations must always be moving onward – developing. The danger is of becoming cosy in the conversations, which then fail to develop”.

If we believe in a truly pastoral approach to Airport Chaplaincy, then the all-important aim is to gain a developing pastoral understanding of that person *and their situation*, for “all of us are like icebergs – the majority of what makes us is hidden below the surface”.

This process cannot be hurried – we are deluding ourselves if we think that relationships of trust and integrity can be built in a short time. Few people of any maturity are going to open up their lives to us without knowing us well enough to be sure of confidentiality – and a non-judgmental reception of whatever they may have to say. It is right that people with whom we are building pastoral relationships have time to test our integrity and our true agenda.

As a relationship is built, pastoral conversation begins to reveal the “whole” person. What begins with the seeking of an understanding about the person’s work may move on to “general background, family, marital status, children, aspirations, joys and disappointments.”

In some cases, the spiritual will also become a natural topic – maybe based on the person’s interest in the Chaplaincy role and the nature of this ministry. Or it may be a decision on the part of the person, when it is felt that the Chaplain is known and trusted, to ask a spiritual question. That may be about the nature of faith or doubt, or it might equally be an observation about the Church – and not always as negative an observation as might be expected! This Chaplain has frequently been surprised at how positively many people still see the Church, and the contribution through its voice and actions that it has to make to contemporary life.

Perhaps most important of all in the matter of building pastoral relationships, and moving conversation on, is our own prayerful preparation. At the theoretical level of course this does not need saying. But at the level of daily practice many of us may need to hear it again! The author’s personal testimony is that when he has consciously and fully brought the ministry to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, the results do follow.

Let the final comment be a recommendation – that each Airport Chaplain be himself or herself. Pastoral conversation, and building relationships, is about

allowing people to see us as we are, in the same way as we want to know something of the real person who is the other partner in the enterprise. Pastoral conversation is a shared journey – even if the majority of it on our part is listening rather than talking.

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Airport Chaplaincy and Major Incidents

- ❑ This is the area of Airport Chaplaincy responsibility that, in the moment of testing, can be the most appreciated by the Airport operator and also by airlines, passengers, visitors, and staff. It is the special response provided in the case of a major ground incident at the Airport or an aircraft accident on or near the airfield. This may also be necessary if the accident occurs at the point of origin or departure. Families will come to the Airport.
- ❑ Airport Chaplains should have a larger pool of clergy or lay ministers, or other suitably-qualified people, to give support at the Airport to all those affected. This will include being available to support survivors, so-called “meeters-and-greeters”, aircrew, and ground staff. A callout list should be established, together with a set of standing orders so that both the response team on the one hand, and the Airport and airlines on the other, clearly know what the expectations are. The Airport Chaplain will normally be the Team Leader and will co-ordinate the response. The response to be offered consists of recognising the various effects that trauma can have on individuals, and then being a resource for emotional “first aid”. Any more formal counselling or debriefing is left to those professionally trained in that discipline. It is not normally a Chaplaincy responsibility to organise or provide this.
- ❑ Much Chaplaincy expertise exists in this area of emergency response – through the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains (IACAC), and a number of individual Airport Chaplaincies worldwide, which have had to deal, not with an occasional airport major exercise but, with the real event. Airport and airline planning now takes place on the assumption of “when” not “if”. Yet, for any number of reasons, those involved in Emergency Planning live with the reality that staff may be slow to take such planning seriously enough. Emergency Planners tend to value Chaplaincy co-operation since Chaplains are amongst those who do take it seriously.
- ❑ Issues that Chaplains will need to bear in mind include: recruiting of the team, resourcing and training, airport security ID clearance for all clergy, lay ministers or others involved in the response team, items to bring when responding to a callout, airport access following a major incident, reporting and deployment, a clear understanding of what the responsibilities in

ministry are, an agreed process for liaison and co-operation with police, airport security, and airport authorities – and many more besides. Clear thinking and frequent re-visiting of the issues and procedures is needed. Some Airport Chaplaincies have advanced their readiness to considerable degrees, and have provided training courses for other groups.

- ❑ Undergirding all the operational thinking, and practical issues of readiness, must be the reason for providing all this – the provision of human welfare resources and emotional and spiritual support to those affected by a major traumatic incident. Inevitably those to be cared for will include survivors, friends and relatives, air traffic control officers, and airport fire and rescue staff, together with any other airport staff who show signs of an adverse post-trauma reaction. But let it be remembered that the response team must not seek to go beyond its proficiency level of general pastoral care and listening. Where training is helpful is that it enables team members to be more alert in spotting the various human reactions to trauma, and equips them to offer a valuable listening ministry, which will aid recovery.
- ❑ One final point here. The Emergency Response Team Leader (ie. usually the Chaplain) should ensure that the Team members themselves have adequate means of de-briefing and reflecting together before going home after a major incident. There is a moral duty of care here for these willing volunteers – in order that none of them should unwittingly become a victim of post-trauma stress.

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Financing Airport Chaplaincy

Introduction :

- ❑ In the USA, very often, Chaplains and the Airport Chapels have to raise their own finance – through appeals, donations, and perhaps the forming of the Chaplaincy as a not-for-profit company or registering as a charity. Many Airport Chaplaincies in the USA are therefore managed by a board of trustees – which the Chaplain may chair.
- ❑ In Western Europe, where Chaplaincy has a longer and better-resourced history, it is more common for Airport Chaplaincy staff to be appointed and paid by the Church denominations. Chapels or Prayer Rooms, where they exist, are usually provided by the Airport authority, as part of the Airport's service to passengers. For the same reason, the Airport may well take financial responsibility for the upkeep of the Chapel and associated office or rooms.

- ❑ In Britain, there is a well-established Industrial Mission, with small ecumenical teams of Workplace Chaplains in many regions. The Airport Chaplain is often part of such a local Chaplaincy Team. Most British international and regional airports now have Chaplains, and the busier general aviation airfields are beginning to follow. Only the largest British airports, however, have *full-time* stipendiary Chaplains. Some others are part-time, and many are volunteers – fulfilling the Airport Chaplaincy as part of a wider ministry appointment in the local parish or pastorate. Wherever possible, Chaplaincies are set up with the agreement of both the Churches and the workplaces (management and workforce) at the Airport.

Good foundations:

- ❑ It is desirable that Airport Chaplaincy should be well-financed by the Church – since this is an arm of the Church's mission to the world. At the same time, it is arguable that those benefiting from Chaplaincy should also contribute, and thus feel an involvement with the Chaplaincy work. Where possible, perhaps the best solution is for the Church and the Airport to contribute equally. In that way, both become "shareholders", but neither are able to assume a controlling interest!
- ❑ The Chaplain's freedom to be an independent, confidential, supportive yet occasionally challenging figure must be preserved, whichever method of financing is chosen. A 50/50 financing arrangement between Airport Company and Churches has worked well at London Luton Airport for many years. Should extra resources be needed from time to time, it is perfectly permissible to approach other companies on the Airport to whom the Chaplaincy ministry is regularly offered.
- ❑ Where there is a Chapel involved as well, people from the local community, and passengers using the facility, may wish to make occasional financial contributions – from which regular Chapel running expenses can be met. In this small way, the Chaplaincy begins to generate some of its own funding. Using it as an example again, at London Luton Airport some of the shops in the Terminal Building have been pleased to take Airport Chapel collecting boxes for customers' unwanted small change. From a handful of boxes comes a small but valuable income for regular Chapel expenses.

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Starting a new Chaplaincy

- ❑ When an Airport Chaplaincy is first set up – in consultation with both the airport authority and the local churches or their representatives – financial needs are few. It is not too much to expect that the airport authority will cover the cost of specific expenses related to visiting at the airport (transport fares, maybe cost of correspondence and phone calls). Most airports are also happy to provide a vacant room or office where the Chaplain may see individuals who wish to speak privately when s/he is on site. One well-justified expense is for the provision of Chaplaincy publicity – with the aim of getting the Chaplain known around the Airport.
- ❑ It is helpful to the Chaplain if the airport authority and/or the appointing church(es) will see the need for training and development of the Chaplain in this ministry – and provide some finance towards an occasional training course, day meeting, or conference on the subject of Airport or Workplace Chaplaincy. Sponsored visits to other airport chaplains are always useful for gaining a clear and rapid picture of best practice. The Chaplain should also take advantage of any chaplaincy-oriented denominational training offered.
- ❑ At a later stage, as the Chaplaincy becomes well-established and the Chaplain is on site for an increasing number of hours per week, further issues of financing will arise: a regular Chaplaincy Office or Room and the question of whether a Chapel or Prayer Room should be built.
- ❑ Eventually it will be necessary to review the Chaplaincy appointment. What may have begun as a voluntary Chaplaincy may now need to become a part-time or even full-time ministry appointment. As a guideline, the Airport Chaplains' Network in the United Kingdom has recommended that a full-time appointment should exist for every 5,000 airport-based staff and/or 5 million passengers per annum.

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Ten Commandments for new Airport Chaplains

1. If embarking on a new Chaplaincy, ensure that the appointment is recognised by both the churches and the Airport, through whatever are the local appointing bodies.
2. Learn of and take a genuine interest in the civil aviation industry – something of its history, the volatile nature of its business, its current state, and its hopes and fears.

3. Spend time reflecting on the nature of what is going on in the totality of the work done in the various airport-based companies, the way in which the products and services are interdependent and combine to serve the passenger and the cargo client.
4. Ensure that both workforce and management are receiving the benefits of Chaplaincy support.
5. Practice workplace visiting around the Airport site – regularly even if not frequently.
How much can be attempted will of course be determined by whether it is a part or whole-time position.
6. Walk the passenger terminal – and prepare prayerfully for opportunities to serve.
7. Put in place an appropriate Emergency Response Team – in co-operation with the Airport Authority.
8. Where it does not already exist, begin to consider the benefits of an Airport Chapel or Prayer Room - to be suggested to management when the time is right!
9. Ensure that all opportunities are taken to update the churches on progress made in the Airport Chaplaincy – since they are the sponsors of this ministry, whatever local form it takes. Without church support, we have no authority to minister. Many Airport Chaplaincies are part-time, fulfilled by clergy or lay ministers in dual-role ministries. Such community involvement as a Chaplaincy can refresh the ministry to the church, too, and it is wise to seek the specific prayer support and involvement of the congregation and its leaders.
10. Look for wider links, and the support they provide – with the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains (IACAC), with the British Isles and Eire Network of Airport Chaplains, and with the Industrial Mission Association of the UK – which is the national body for Workplace Chaplaincy.

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Conclusion

Chaplaincy, in all its settings, is part of the mission and ministry of the Church. It grows out of a passion for the Kingdom of God to be further established in this world, through Christian influence. Airport Chaplains offer a servant ministry to any who will receive it. All is done in the name of Christ and His love, and the concern of the Church for people where they are – at work or travelling. Chaplaincy concern extends to all on the Airport, and to the aircrew based there.

Whilst the setting for this ministry may be unusual, and even seen as somewhat glamorous, the ministry is of pastoral care and concern for people's needs and for the issues that face them – and therefore is authentic Christian ministry. The difference from pastoral ministry to the Church congregation is that in most cases no shared faith can be taken for granted at the Airport. Indeed, it will probably be that any discussion of faith must wait for the building of relationships first. The process of building a Chaplaincy cannot be rushed.

As the Airport Chaplain builds relationships over time, foundations are being laid for what – in many cases – will later become real opportunities for personal ministry.

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Further Resources at:
<http://www.iacac.ws>

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