

BOOK REVIEWS



Martin Doblmeier, dir., *Chaplains*, (Alexandria, VA: Journey Films, 2016), 117 minutes.

Chaplains, a two-hour documentary by filmmaker Martin Doblmeier, explores the intricate worlds of eight religious leaders representing different faith traditions. Including Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist. The settings that are presented include the military, a prison, a business, the U.S. Senate, a children's medical center, police, a retirement home, and the NASCAR circuit. The film follows these chaplains on their daily rounds as they attend to the spiritual and practical needs of the people in their various settings. It demonstrates how religious leaders, professionally trained within their own particular faith tradition, reach out to people of all faiths and to those without faith to respond to deep human pain during times of crisis, stress, and unrest. The credits for this film list a large number of highly respected and competent consultants who were used in producing the movie.

The documentary is a fine introduction to the work of chaplains today, giving personal examples and dramatic illustrations of their interactions with people during challenging circumstances. It could be a valuable educational tool to use in a number of settings, including congregations, seminaries, book groups, etc. It provides not only an overview of what is involved in this often misunderstood profession but also a brief introduction into different faith traditions and the influences they have on a person's life, especially during critical times. The official trailer can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/120434392>.

This reviewer found the section on military chaplaincy particularly relevant for an introductory class on pastoral care in the seminary setting.

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Given the growing number of seminary students who are exploring military chaplaincy, it provides a valuable introduction to this specialized vocation. The film could also widen the perceptions of other students for whom this expression of ministry is not within their field of vision. This is particularly relevant today since so many veterans are returning to civilian life, where their experiences on the battlefield are not fully understood. This is a painful reality in society at large and in many communities of faith in particular. The section on military chaplains could be augmented by materials addressing moral injuries. Rita Nakashima Brock's work in this area is particularly helpful and a good place to start for exploring this timely subject.

The Journey Films website has excellent resources for using the film for discussion and training. It also includes links to additional resources, including chaplain organizations and religious sponsors. It offers links for further reading, including some that address moral injury. Their website can be accessed through <http://journeyfilms.com/chaplains/>. *Chaplains* also has a Facebook page that is worth looking at since it provides additional information since the film was first produced.

Although this introduction to the work of chaplains is helpful and compelling, a sequel would be most welcome. Additional coverage of other chaplaincy venues, such as fire and other community responders, could be explored to fill out the growing map of religious service.

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