

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

AN IMPORTANT VOLUNTEER: A CASE STUDY

OF THE WICHITA FALLS POLICE CHAPLAIN

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INTRODUCTION

Unique to the law enforcement profession is the role of the chaplain. Coming in all ages, shapes, sizes, and varying in attitudes and faiths, the chaplain intercedes in people's lives, just as their police counterpart. But, unlike the officer who has the primary function to protect and serve the people within his jurisdiction, the chaplain serves and ministers to the needs of all, including the officer and the officer's family. This places the chaplain in a very supportive role within the foundation of the law enforcement community. The chaplain also experiences an invigorating challenge in this new role. He is introduced to a constant crisis environment involving the law enforcement officer or a citizen. The emergency room of a hospital, domestic disturbances, automobile accidents, attempted suicides, and hostage situations now become a common place in the chaplain's life.

The chaplain may be in an officer's home talking with the husband and wife about their marital problem. Or he may be in his office, counseling a walk-in, who, in the depths of despair, is convinced that God is punishing him for his drinking and sinful ways by letting him lose his job, his

family and friends. The chaplain may be knocking on the door of a home where he will have to tell the family that their only son has been killed in an automobile accident. Or he may be facing the most difficult task of trying to console the family of a slain police officer. (DeRevere 1989)

The chaplain is now in the arena of life that deals with people constantly questioning the existence of God and often asking the question, "Why me?". No one cares who you are, although they are polite enough to ask, "Are you Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, etc.? It's nice to have you here." After that he begins easing into the fact that he is now 'Chaplain'. This becomes his new identity. He begins meeting with other chaplains and explores what they have in common, which is usually the Lord. This active interest in meeting with and joining in positive discussions and sharing of services not only draws chaplains together, but it demonstrates to the men and women a special bond in their chaplains. (Reese, et al. 1990)

Law enforcement personnel have a habit of selecting the people they want to help them. Jealousy is not the issue, but rather the ability to get the job done. A good chaplain will allow this to happen. What becomes successful for one, becomes a success for all.

If a Catholic wants to see the Protestant or Jewish Chaplain or visa-versa, that is fine. The chaplain's role is to obtain results. It is not a matter of religious sect that counts. What counts is that the chaplain has walked in

the way of the Lord and it has been seen and is now being sought by another. What becomes important is the making of the Lord present to all. Preaching and evangelizing through preaching cannot be tolerated. The chaplain must be God - centered in his life. If he is, he will be sought out and nourished through the understanding of his brothers and sisters in ministry as well as those who are served. (Reese, et al. 1990).

The role of the chaplain in law enforcement is dealing with officers in their work environment. A minister is accustomed to seeing someone when that person is ready and willing for guidance. It is usually associated with a neat pastoral setting. But, in the role of a chaplain, the neatness is often missing and the understanding of what happens, just happens, becomes evident. Therefore toleration and understanding must become part of the chaplain's discipline. The chaplain soon comes to the realization that the men and women in law enforcement, work in a world of intense stress and strain, day after day. The chaplain has a new awakening, by being introduced to the real world of the law enforcement officer.

HISTORY

The early history of the chaplaincy has not been well preserved. Much of the early historical data for this research project had to be gathered through information

from other research papers, periodicals, and interviews with present and retired chaplains.

Chaplain Lowell Lawson, historian for the International Conference of Police Chaplains, believes that the chaplaincy had its beginning early in the 1900's. It started as a very informal association with the law enforcement agencies. Various ministers would visit with officers on their beat or in the station house. The ministers were also available to aid in emergency situations requiring expertise.

(Lawson 1994)

In 1949, the Detroit Police Department had a certain group of chaplains for ceremonial purposes. The chaplains would provide assistance where they could, but they still were not organized. The need to bring about a formalized organization for Chaplains became a topic of discussion.

(Lawson 1994).

The first full-time departmentally funded police chaplain, Edward Steele - retired, began serving in 1950 in the Portland Police Bureau, Portland Oregon. He operated a fully ecclesiastic counseling service which was formally identified as a personnel counseling service rather than a police chaplaincy. (Hinckley 1985)

During the late 60's and early 70's the Philadelphia Police Department had a strong chaplaincy program. It was attributed to the growing social unrest of the inner cities and the fact that the program hired a professional and capable staff with a strong commitment to the program.

As the program evolved, it employed additional police officers who were ordained. However, many of these ordinations were questionable in terms of the training and knowledge they represented. In addition to the questionable credentials, the officers were using police time to perform religious functions, such as funerals and weddings. This created a conflict of interest and undermined the integrity of the program.

As a result of the changing times and the problems encountered with the chaplaincy corp, the program now has three full time chaplains who are ordained ministers and ex-police officers. These chaplains provide counseling and ecumenical support to the officers as well as to the community. They also maintain a good working relationship with the administration of the department. (Hinckley 1985)

In the early 70's, chaplains in Washington D.C. and Chicago were holding their meetings in conjunction with the Auxiliary of International Association of Chiefs of Police. But, the chaplains did not always agree on some of the sites chosen for these meetings. For example, one of the conferences was held in a Playboy Club in Chicago. Because of these conflicts, a group of approximately seventy chaplains began meeting periodically to share information and training. (Lawson 1994)

In 1973, Chaplain Joe Dudley of Washington D.C., began realizing a need for more uniformity among chaplains across the nation. Problems were arising in the correct procedures

in dealing with death notifications of slain law enforcement officers, as well as a poor communications network among chaplains in different cities. Chaplain Dudley arranged several meetings with other chaplains for the purpose of setting up a formal chaplaincy organization. As a result of these meetings, approximately three hundred chaplains from across the United States met in October 1973 in Washington D.C. Because of this meeting, the International Conference of Police Chaplains was established. Chaplain Dudley was elected as the first president of the organization. (Lawson, 1994)

The membership of the I.C.P.C. has continued to develop in their training and grow in participation. The organization's membership now numbers over seven thousand nationally.

TRAINING

In most law enforcement agencies, the chaplaincy is voluntary. Training programs must be designed to accommodate time constraints between their devotion of their own congregation and the law enforcement agency.

A variety of structural training programs can be found across the United States. For example, the Detroit Police Department Chaplaincy Training period lasts five months. Seven three-hour sessions are held weekly during the first two months, followed by a three-month internship with monthly

class sessions. The classes are taught in a seminar style with an open exchange of ideas and viewpoints. (Lawson 1994)

Other agencies have chosen a shorter training period of eight to sixteen hours. They cover several topics which provide a general orientation for the new chaplains. Then periodic training is done on a monthly basis or as the need arises.

The training programs usually include several basic areas of instruction. These areas include:

- A. **General Orientation** - this includes general information about the agency and personnel, the organization structure, and a tour of the premises.
- B. **Familiarization** - a tour of the communication center with an introduction to the signals, codes and radio procedures used by the department. The viewing of police vehicles and weapons used by the officers and an explanation of the different beats or sectors that officers patrol.
- C. **Police Behavior** - an introduction into personal and personnel problems within law enforcement agencies. A general understanding of the causes and effects of the physical, mental and emotional stress in police work.
- D. **Chaplains Role** - information and discussions on how the chaplain can best serve the citizens in the community and their commitment to the department's officers.
- E. **Victim Interaction** - instruction on counseling victims of crime, officers coping with post-shooting trauma and death notification.
- F. **Referrals** - information about local social services and programs that provide available assistance to anyone in crisis situations.
- G. **Specific Training Areas** - instruction on fire-arms safety, first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

- H. **Intern Training** - attending officer's roll call, community relations meetings, crime prevention meetings, memorial services, visiting of city and county jails, and riding with officers during their tour of duty.
- I. **Multi-Cultural Awareness** - instruction on ethnic makeup of the local area and the cultural diversity.

Training does not cease after the chaplain attends a training academy. Agencies have monthly meetings that chaplains attend for updated training. These meetings can involve discussions on various topics of interest, videos, field trips, or guest speakers. Meetings may be scheduled in different locations such as hospitals, jail facilities, eating establishments, mental health meeting rooms, etc., to provide atmosphere on the topic of discussion. The occasional changes in the site locations serves as an aid in preventing redundancy in the chaplaincy meetings.

Chaplains must continue to have in-service training, just as the officers. This allows them the opportunity to grow in knowledge in the ever changing field of law enforcement.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAPLAIN

Community professionals are often unprepared to handle many of the unique problems associated with law enforcement. Bringing ecclesiastic enlightenment and understanding to police officers and the citizens of the community is the primary purpose and focus of the chaplaincy

program. (Hinckley 1985)

The chaplain becomes quickly aware that the officer becomes involved in many high stress situations during his daily routine. Therefore, the chaplain must learn to function as part of a team in a variety of unique situations. Chaplains must become knowledgeable in the following critical areas to provide the necessary assistance to officers:

A. Crisis Intervention and Referrals During Family Disturbance Calls

One of the most dangerous calls for an officer to handle is the family disturbance call. An officer will frequently return to the same address again and again, for the same problem. The officer has to deal with a wide range of human emotions, frequently with alcohol or other drugs involved. The officer's first objective is to gain control of the situation through the use of various separating and calming techniques. Then, through the use of defusing methods, the officer attempts to mediate the situation to a successful compromise.

Law enforcement chaplains are not often involved in these type of calls due to agency's policies and regulations. But, the chaplain may be the agent for breaking the cycle of recidivism on domestic calls. (DeRevere 1989)

Domestic disputes do not always center on

husband-wife problems. They might also involve two lovers, relatives, parent-child, tenants living in one home, etc. The chaplain's primary goal to resolve the disturbance would be to get disputants to accept referral as a helping resource. The chaplain should have a good working knowledge of the community resources for counseling. These may include marriage counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, lawyers, youth guidance counselors, etc.

To make referrals effective, the chaplain must respond to the scene at the time officers are making the domestic call. Therefore, the referral can be made at the time of the disturbance. This allows the chaplain to make follow-up phone calls the next day to check on progress.

A reduction of recidivism in domestic disturbance calls may be accomplished if a chaplain is included in the initial police response, allowing a referral to be made and accepted by the disputants.

B. Crisis Negotiation in Hostage Situations

Hostage negotiation requires the use of a trained hostage negotiator. Most chaplains have not been trained in this specialized field, nor have they been good candidates for a negotiator.

The chaplain's role in hostage situations

lends itself as a means of support. The chaplain must be a support for the officers at the scene, for the victims, and support for those making the decisions, especially in providing information that relates to religious issues. (DeRevere 1989)

Any or all of the following may be done by the chaplain:

(1) He/she must provide support and encouragement for the officers. The chaplain becomes the visible reminder of God's representative during an intense stressed situation. This can often be the reassurance the officers need.

(2) Should the hostage taker(s) ask a religious question or make a religious statement, the chaplain can provide his expertise in the form of interpretation of these statements. This can be a valuable asset to the negotiator.

(3) The chaplain can provide support through a calming and reassuring demeanor to all family members, witnesses, and ex-hostages. Through this support, not only does the chaplain relieve some of the situational fear and anxiety, but may be able to obtain valuable information to assist the team in resolving the conflict.

(4) The chaplain should always remain alert to information that may help the negotiation team. Due to the many different contacts the

chaplain may make during a situation, he/she must¹²
realize that they become one of the team
informational gatherers.

(5) The chaplain may be more familiar with various referral and medical resources than other members of the negotiating team. This may allow the chaplain to secure information more quickly and easily than the officers involved in the situation. Due to these relationships, the chaplain may be able to expedite the collection of necessary information.

(6) The offering of prayers for all involved is an important task of the chaplain. Also, the chaplain should make it a practice to always carry a Bible to the scene of the incident. It is not uncommon for the negotiator to need the use of a Bible during hostage situations. (DeRevere 1989)

In hostage situations, as well as other critical incidents, the chaplain's primary role is to provide comfort and support to everyone involved. A secondary role is to become an information source and a link for communication.

C. Notifications

The much dreaded death or serious injury notification responsibility that officers must make to the next of kin is never easy. (LaChasse,

1982)

Chaplains that accompany officers during these notifications have proven to be an asset. This duty can also be performed by the chaplain if the victim is an officer.

Officers have always been reluctant to make death notifications because there is no easy way to bring bad news to a family. More departments are using the chaplain to make, or assist an officer in making, the death notification.

The chaplain is viewed as God's representative. The chaplain can provide strength, support and compassion to a family that must deal with sudden, devastating news. Also, survivors have someone present to provide information as the shock diminishes and obtain answers to their questions. If the family is in need of their own clergy, the chaplain can offer to contact the clergy person. As the chaplain continues to interact with the family, bonding occurs and the family gains trust in his/her guidance.

The chaplain can also become the information gatherer for the law enforcement agency. The family may express their questions and provide answers through the aid of the chaplain. With the chaplain present, the family may talk more openly to an officer or other representative of the Department.

D. A "Significant Other" for the Law Enforcement Officer

Of all the functions the chaplain must perform, perhaps the most important is the counseling of members of the department.

Counseling does not become automatic just because the chaplain joins the department's membership. The chaplain, just like the rookie officer, must win acceptance by the officers to gain their trust. An officer will not confide in a chaplain until the officer knows the chaplain is trustworthy, or until the officer is in so much trouble that he is forced to go to a chaplain.

In order for the chaplain to gain the trust needed, the chaplain must become highly visible to all police personnel. The chaplain needs to appear at roll calls, be seen walking and visiting in the hallways of the police station and requesting the opportunity to ride with different officers. When officers are making various calls, the chaplain can drop by to offer assistance, as long as the chaplain does not interfere with the officer's duties. The chaplain can also inquire about an officer as an individual and the officer's family. Through this visibility, the chaplain works to gain the trust necessary for good communication with the police personnel.

A chaplain's visibility throughout the rank and file of officers will challenge them to test him. The officer's stories may become more spicy and their language more ludicrous or vulgar. Officers will want to know if the chaplain is for real. If the chaplain begins to rebuke the officers for their language, he has probably doomed his acceptance. The chaplain's role is quite different from his ministerial role in his congregation. His challenge is to be able to minister to these officers and be there to provide assistance in any situation that he is needed. To do this, he must gain their acceptance. He must realize he has entered onto the officer's turf and must learn how to react appropriately. As the chaplain gains acceptance, he will see changes take place in the officer's attitudes and their language during the time he associates with them.

(Vaughn 94)

Once they begin to accept him, officers will want to know if he is trustworthy. As the chaplain wins their confidence and trust, they will begin to trust him with their feelings and thoughts. If the officers decide that the chaplain cannot be trusted, the chaplain will remain as an outsider. This is where the separation of chaplain and clergy takes place.

Not every clergy person can assume the role of a chaplain. (Cunningham 1992)

The chaplain will find that counseling officers is just like counseling other parishioners, except it will be done in many different places. Much of the counseling will take place in the field. The counseling may take place while the officer is on patrol. While riding with the officer, the conversations that take place in the patrol car between the officer and chaplain can involve problem solving. Frequently, counseling will be done in a booth in some coffee shop.

The chaplain can obviously handle many of the "routine" personal problems troubling the officer. But, the chaplain should also recognize his own limitations. Knowing when to refer is as important to a chaplain as it is to a pastor dealing with his congregation. Problems of a more serious nature should be referred to a professional trained to deal with such problems. Making a good referral will add to the officer's confidence in the chaplain.

The chaplain should retain a good rapport and working knowledge of the other professionals within the community. He should know the professionals that can deal effectively with police officers. Not all professionals are capable

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of dealing with officers and a wrong referral can have an impact on the officer's confidence of the chaplain.

The law enforcement chaplain is in a unique position to provide needed assistance to the officer and other members of the department. But, the gaining of acceptance and trust must be accomplished before the chaplain can provide the assistance his role brings to the department.

E. Ceremonial Duties

In the world of the peace officer, ceremonies are common place. Law enforcement chaplains are periodically involved in these occasions. Ceremonies may include dedications of facilities, invocations and benedictions at academy graduations, award and promotional events, banquets and weddings. Also included is a more difficult task for the chaplain, that of the police funeral, especially if it is an officer that was killed in the line of duty.

When an officer is killed in the line of duty, the chaplain should be notified immediately. The chaplain should accompany those personnel who will make the notification to the next of kin.

The chaplain can console the family as well as offer any assistance possible. The chaplain must not do anything that would interfere with the

observances and traditions of the family. His function is to support the family and offer assistance in the completion of the funeral arrangements.

Often, the family will have many questions and concerns about the death of their loved one. The chaplain can assist the family by channeling their questions and requests through the proper police personnel.

Whether the death was in the line of duty, illness, accident, suicide, or any other cause, the chaplain may be called upon to preach the funeral service. The chaplain should remember that the family's wishes are the paramount consideration. If the family wants a short service, the chaplain should respect their wishes.

This may provide the chaplain with a unique opportunity. He may have known the officer through his relationship with him on the department. This will assist the chaplain in relating insight on the officer's life to those assembled at the funeral service. This can provide comfort to the family knowing that the chaplain speaks with the knowledge of being one of the members in the brotherhood of law enforcement.

F. Community Liaison

The chaplaincy program should not be

considered strictly as a public relations device. As previously discussed, the chaplain has a very diversified role. But, under certain conditions, chaplains can be used to provide information on police actions or policies which concern segments of the community. This may involve anything from an ongoing crisis situation, to a lecture to some civic organization.

If the agency has a volunteer chaplaincy program, one of the quickest ways to doom it's existence is to insist that the chaplain convince the community that all police programs and actions are correct. The community has little tolerance for insincere goodwill and the chaplain does not want to be alienated from the community, or in some cases, from his own congregation.

Because of the sensitive areas that exist within the law enforcement community, the agency manager must exercise care when involving chaplains in the various public relation activities that arise. The chaplaincy program can provide a department with an added source of public relations, but it must not be perceived as a salesperson for the agency's manager.

G. Special Duties

Many chaplains have special concerns and expertise which can result in the adoption of

special programs. (La Chasse 1982)

Just as law enforcement training has been enhanced over the years, religious training has diversified its educational disciplines. A chaplain's educational background may now include studies in drug and alcohol counseling, family dynamics, stress management or cultural awareness.

This allows the agency the opportunity to take full advantage of the chaplain's specific expertise. The chaplain could be useful as an instructor in the police academy. He could also play a primary role in a family disturbance or hostage incident. Having knowledge of the chaplain's educational background can provide an agency with the opportunity to develop a variety of plans for personnel usage.

OVERVIEW OF THE WICHITA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

The chaplaincy program has been a relatively new concept for the Wichita Falls Police Department. After reviewing different chaplaincy programs throughout the U.S., our department developed the program we thought would best serve the community and officers.

A. Starting the Chaplaincy Program

During 1988 and early in 1989, Wichita Falls Police Officer Keith Jenkins began meeting with the administration about the possibility of starting a chaplaincy program for the department. The department had always enjoyed a good relationship with clergy within the community. If the assistance of clergy was needed in a specific situation, one would be contacted. The clergy would quickly respond to the scene to offer whatever assistance he/she could for the involved persons and officers.

One of the problems with this type of partnership was that the officer at the scene did not always have much personal knowledge about the clergy that arrived. This made it difficult for the officer to make a decision on how much interaction the clergy should have with the people involved in the incident.

Officer Jenkins knew this problem existed, as well as the problem of stress associated with the job. He was well aware that officers often held emotions in and needed someone to share some of their innermost feelings. For some officers the outlet was not available. He believed that having a chaplain readily available to the officers might provide the catalyst needed for this type of stress

management. (Jenkins 1994).

Along with his chaplaincy proposal to the administration, Officer Jenkins had been studying other programs in various law enforcement agencies. He had communicated with several chaplains in different cities to familiarize himself with their program structure and the working relationship with their department.

Officer Jenkins also met with members of the Wichita Falls Police Officer's Association to explain the need of a chaplaincy program. They became interested in the program and offered their assistance in attempting to persuade the administration to adopt this program.

In September of 1989, the administration gave their approval to start a chaplaincy program. Several meetings with various chaplains were held in order to explain the police chaplains role and to answer questions and seek input on the type of program that would best suit the interests of the department.

By December, a board of chaplains was organized to put together rules and regulations for their programs. By January of 1990, the program was coming together and training became the focus of attention. (Jenkins 1994).

A conference was set up for those clergy interested in joining the department chaplaincy program. Chaplain Jack Price from the Albuquerque, New Mexico Police Department was the guest speaker. One of the main thoughts he expressed to the ninety six attendants was to avoid joining the program with the intention of recruiting persons for their congregation's bible class. He explained that the chaplaincy program was a totally different type of ministry. Chaplain Price then presented the mechanics of the program and how his department organized their program. His program was well received by all those in attendance. (Jenkins 1994).

The first department chaplaincy training course was held in February, 1990. Forty-eight clergy were in attendance. The eight hour curriculum covered such topics as:

1. Purpose of the program
2. Police department familiarization
3. Working relationships with Officers
4. Radio procedure
5. Crime scene protection
6. Media relations
7. Confidentiality of department information
8. Gratuities
9. Roll call briefings (Vaughn 1994)

One of the first duties performed by one of the chaplains, was to give the benediction at the Forty Fifth Police Academy Graduation. Also,

since the inception of the program, there has been a chaplain on duty or on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

On August 27, 1990, the Forty-Sixth Wichita Falls Police Academy began its training. Two of the persons in the academy were Chaplain's Frank Vaughn and Max Davis. They attended the entire seventeen week academy to gather insight on the learning process of police recruits. They went through the graduation exercise with the recruits on December 21, 1990. Since that time, the knowledge they learned has been an asset for teaching new members of the chaplaincy program.

B. Program Assessment

The inception of the chaplaincy program has had a positive affect on our department. The program now numbers thirty chaplains from many different faiths. The chaplains meet monthly, either in the briefing room or at a chosen location, to discuss information and have a training session. They keep up with their own monthly scheduling. A chaplain is assigned to a twelve hour shift, either on duty or on call. As soon as his shift ends, another one begins. This keeps a chaplain available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

When a chaplain shows up for his tour of duty,

he usually walks through the hallways of the department, making his presence known. He frequently walks in different offices to exchange in friendly conversation with personnel. He then attends the roll call briefing with the officers.

After briefing, the chaplains will ride with one or more of the officers during his tour of duty. The chaplain chooses the amount time he spends with each officer. He is there for general conversation, serious decisions, or soul searching information exchange.

The chaplain is also available to respond to the scene of critical incidents such as family disturbances, hostage situations, lost persons, officer involved shootings, etc. He often assists in delivering death notifications or goes to the hospital to be with families of those seriously injured.

Some of our chaplains have conducted weddings for some of our department personnel, as well as funerals. They have also participated in ceremonial events and police academy graduations. Whatever has been asked of them has always been met with friendship and a willingness to take on the task.

CONCLUSION

The chaplaincy program has proved to be a valuable asset to our department. The chaplains have shown a devotion to their work and have made a concerned effort to make friendships among police personnel. Because of the number of chaplains in our program, departmental personnel have the option of contacting a clergy of their faith or of a faith they desire.

Most of the officers enjoy having a chaplain ride with them during part of their tour of duty. Officers have become more open with them in discussing their feelings because of the trust that has developed in this relationship. Also, officers are not hesitant to involve a chaplain in an incident that would call for their expertise.

The program has also been a learning process for the chaplain. Many of the chaplains have had to make decisions and provide advise to their parishioners over matters that have been on topics that were taught in some class or read about. The chaplains are now experiencing first hand, the reality of domestic problems, homeless persons, drugs, suicides and homicides that were taught in their studies. The chaplains also experience the every day stress of citizens in the community and that of the police officer on patrol.

The continued success of this program lies in the acceptance of the chaplains by the officers. Presently,

this relationship is enjoying a high degree of trust and friendship. Officers are comforted in the knowledge that they have someone within the organization who will listen to their problems, discuss them openly and not pass judgement.

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