

CHAPLAINCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

SECOND EDITION

CHAPLAINCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

I What It Is and How to Do It

By

CHAPLAIN DAVID W. DE REVERE, M.Div.

*Retired Executive Director
International Conference of Police Chaplains*

CHAPLAIN WILBERT A. CUNNINGHAM, D.Min.

*Volunteer Chaplain
Federal Bureau of Investigation*

CHAPLAIN TOMMY W. MOBLEY, D.Min.

*President
Louisville Theological Seminary*

CHAPLAIN JOHN A. PRICE

*Former Senior Chaplain
Albuquerque (NM) Police Department*



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CONTRIBUTORS

David W. DeRevere, Editor

*Retired Executive Director, International Conference of Police Chaplains
Volunteer Chaplain, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Former Volunteer Chaplain, Old Saybrook (CT) Department of Police Services
M. Div., Yale University Divinity School*

Wilbert A. Cunningham

*Volunteer Chaplain, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Volunteer Chaplain, Noblesville (IN) Police Department
Former Senior Chaplain, Indianapolis (IN) Police Department
D. Min., Christian Theological Seminary*

Tommy W. Mobley

*President, Louisville Theological Seminary
Volunteer Chaplain, Louisville (KY) Division of Police
Former Volunteer Chaplain, Scottsburg (IN) Police Department
Former Volunteer Chaplain, Scott County (IN) Sheriff's Department
D. Min., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

John A. Price

*Deceased, May 4, 1998
Former Senior Chaplain, Albuquerque (NM) Police Department
M. Div., Lutheran School of Theology*

PREFACE

This book was written by four experienced chaplains. Between them, they have 79 years of law enforcement chaplaincy ministry.

Chaplain Wilbert Cunningham wrote Chapters 2, 4, and Appendix C. Chaplain John A. Price wrote Chapters 5, 7, 13, 15, and 16. Chapter 6 was written by Chaplain Tommy W. Mobley. The rest and the editing was done by Chaplain David W. DeRevere. Each chapter was reviewed by the other authors, who suggested improvements and revisions. In addition, a special thanks goes to Chaplain Walton J. Tully for careful proofreading and corrections.

The writing of this guidebook for chaplains was a labor of love for law enforcement chaplaincy and a willingness to share what experience has taught us.

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CHAPLAINCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There are fifteen good reasons for having a chaplain in your department. Few chaplains are able to do all fifteen. The reasons for having a chaplaincy program are:

1. WHEN AN OFFICER IS INJURED, ILL OR KILLED. The chaplain visits an injured or sick officer in the hospital or at home. Often, the chaplain is included in notifying the family of an injured officer, sometimes being the one responsible for getting the spouse to the hospital. In the worst possible situation—when an officer has been killed—the chaplain is involved in telling the family that their loved one has died. The message to your officers is that the department cares about them; that they are important (see Chap. 15).

2. PROBLEM OFFICERS OR OFFICERS WITH A PROBLEM. Officers are expected to have all the answers. We expect them to handle any situation thrown at them. Yet, who can they turn to for help when they have a problem of their own? Admitting to someone (sometimes even themselves) that they have a problem which they can't handle doesn't come easily. As a rule, they will not discuss it with anyone. If a chaplain is available who the officer knows can be trusted to maintain confidentiality (including from his supervisor or chief), often-times the problem can be dealt with before it ruins a marriage, embarrasses or stains the department, handicaps or destroys an officer (see Chap. 8 and 13).

3. FAMILY OF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS. The chaplain is available to counsel and help all department personnel. Many times when an officer has a problem, it relates to his family. The sympathetic, trusted chaplain becomes the natural one to turn to for help. This can be by either the officer or a member of his/her family (see Chap. 13).

4. CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES. All personnel receive the same care and attention from the chaplain, including the non-sworn employees. The most important resource any department has is its people. Anything that can be done to preserve and strengthen personnel strengthens the department. The largest budget item in any department is for personnel. Conserving this resource is a sound investment. Emotionally and spiritually, the chaplain can help keep this resource healthy (see Chap. 8).

5. DEATH NOTIFICATIONS. One of the least liked tasks by officers is making death notifications. A chaplain accompanying an officer or making the notification himself will speed the officer's return to available status. The chaplain can stay with the bereaved family until appropriate arrangements have been made. The lasting results are excellent public relations for the department. The bereaved will always remember that the department's representative stayed with them as long as needed to get over the initial shock (see Chap. 9).

6. EDUCATION-TEACHING. Stress management, dealing with death, and ethics are examples of natural topics for chaplains to teach. The chaplain can be utilized both in recruit training and in-service classes. Family life and spouse orientation are two other areas chaplains frequently handle (see Chap. 18).

7. HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND BARRICADE SUBJECTS. As part of the crisis response team, the chaplain is a support member. He or she is available to the command center to help secure information about the religious background of the hostage taker; answer religious questions; and/or supply emotional support to the family members at the crisis scene. Sometimes the chaplain is the best one to elicit information from family members, neighbors, or medical professionals. Seldom should the chaplain be the direct negotiator. Most chaplains are not trained as negotiators (and might have trouble lying if called upon to do so). Instead, he/she is assigned between the first and second perimeters to supply answers, research and support (see Chap. 14).

8. PRISONERS. Ministry to prisoners most often is handled by special prison or jail chaplains. But the departmental chaplain may be available by special request to see that a prisoner's spiritual needs are met. In some smaller jails, qualified jail chaplains are not available and the law enforcement chaplain will have to see that this gap is filled. Sometimes there are legitimate special circumstances where the

department chaplain's help is appropriate. The chaplain might be the one to contact the prisoner's family, arrange for special food, etc. (see Chap. 18).

9. VICTIM ASSISTANCE. Helping people to start overcoming major traumas can be another role for the chaplain. This is especially appropriate if the department does not have a victim assistance unit. When a major fire destroys a person's home, help is needed with the immediate problems of finding clothing and shelter. Rape, serious assaults, mugging of elderly persons are all traumatic events where compassionate support is needed. Transients need to be dealt with. The chaplain does not necessarily do the counseling himself but knows what the community helping resources are and how to make a referral to them (see Chap. 17).

10. RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS. Kosher food for visiting dignitaries; protocol in dealing with church officials; religious quotes found at crime scenes—the chaplain is the logical one to turn to for answers to questions involving religions (see Chap. 18).

11. LIAISON WITH OTHER CLERGY AND THE COMMUNITY. The chaplain can foster good public relations with clergy and religious leaders in the community. A positive rapport with the churches can help every department. This is also true with other community groups (see Chap. 18).

12. PRAYERS AT CEREMONIES. Whether it is a graduation from the training academy or the dedication of a new facility, the chaplain can be counted on to be the “official” pray-er for the department. Frequently, the chaplain will coordinate in enlisting other leading clergy from the community to take part in important departmental events (see Chap. 18, Appendix A).

13. AWARDS, REVIEW BOARDS AND OTHER COMMITTEES. Some departments have their chaplain serve on hiring boards, awards boards, review boards, discipline boards, etc.

14. GRIEF, DEATH AND SUICIDE. Unfortunately, dealing with death in all its forms is part of the law enforcement world. Officers have to handle many and varied calls involving grief—both of victims, friends and, sometimes, themselves (see Chap. 9 and 15). Chaplains can be invaluable in helping to work through grief and grief issues.

15. HUMANIZING IT ALL. A visible chaplain stands as a reminder that we are all dealing with people. All are human beings—