

Rev. Wyatt's Proposal For Police Chaplain Merits Consideration

The primary role of a Chaplain is to be, before all else, a clergyman. He may, in some instance, be a member of the department, formally. But he is first and above all, a clergyman.

His functions may be divided roughly into four categories of work.

1. CEREMONIAL AND RITUAL: A Chaplain's ceremonial duties are to be present at certain departmental ceremonies--ceremonies of appointment and promotional award. He takes part in Police Memorial Day services and the functions of the religious societies of a department.

At times, the Chaplain will conduct wake and funeral services for department members. He may, in tradition, be called upon to arrange, or

administer the last rites to an officer. The Chaplain is called upon to visit the family and, at times, even inform the family of an officer's death. A Chaplain can be of considerable assistance to a commanding officer and to a family in such tragic circumstances. Chaplains themselves never fail to be moved by the solidarity of policemen and the concern they exhibit for the family of a departed comrade.

2. A second function a chaplain may fulfill is that of an instructional nature. This teaching work may be done on various levels. It may be entitled "Moral Aspects of Law Enforcement," and contain such subjects as; courage, prejudice, sacrifice, integrity, and reputation. The role of the Chaplain following the presentation, discussion is encouraged. One special program, "Police Family Life Seminar" is particularly explained to the trainees. This program would especially be useful to new officers.

The Police Family Life Seminar looks essentially at the question, "How does police work affect a man's family life, and how does an officer's family affect his professional performance?" The young officers and their wives share ideas with a panel of three policemen and their wives, plus a chaplain who serves as chairman. The panel helps the wives of the new officers to understand and find reassurance in the fact that their problems may be common to other police wives and they are reassured by the fact that other wives have learned to cope with these situations and stresses. This group discussion approach enables officers to see that the reactions of their wives may be typical of the reactions of many wives. In other words, their wife is not being petty or unreasonable. The seminar has helped marriages, and it has also saved skilled trained men for the department, who might otherwise not have been remained in police work because of family pressures, which might otherwise not have been resolved. An advance training program of the department's training command where experienced officers are brought back in small groups for updating instructions. The topic discussed is "Issues in Human Relations." Such subjects as the concept of service--The Dignity of People--What a willingness to communicate and to find new ways to communicate says to people.

3. A third function the Chaplain fulfills is that of counseling. The Chaplain's name, address and phone numbers are listed in each command. The men tend to seek out a Chaplain to discuss family problems, difficulties in police work, and spiritual concerns. They use the services of the Chaplain here as they would use the services of any clergyman. They know the privileged character of their communication will be respected. Their confidences will be kept. Only with their permission will their name be mentioned should a supervisory officer have to be approached. Always respecting chain of command, the Chaplain serves as something of an "Ombudsman." He expedites as all clergymen do, the securing of community services a police officer or his family may require. Some of his counseling will involve visiting injured of sick members of the departments and their families.

4. Finally, a police Chaplain may help in what I call "liaison" efforts. Often he can help in the setting up of a (a) Community Rumor Control

Centers, when that seems advisable. (b) In the time of disaster or civil disturbances and in planning for these situations, the Chaplain can assist and many have assisted in the mobilization of church resources, such as personnel, and buildings for community use. (c) At a time of disaster or civil disturbances and in planning for these situations, the Chaplain can assist and many have assisted in the mobilization of church resources, such as personnel, and buildings for community use. (c) At a time when some younger clergymen have seemed less sympathetic to police, a Chaplain can offer an interpretation of police work to young clerics in a positive light. The Chaplain must cause the man to ask himself that most fundamental of questions: Why? Why do I do what I do? What are the values that underlie our course of action--Why can we not always accept what might be the easy way? When seeking a Chaplain, seek a reflective man.

It almost goes without saying, ask a spiritual man. You want a Chaplain to lift the sights of your men. To bring his specific contribution, you MUST ask a spiritual man, a man of deep personal principles, "A Man for all Seasons."

Finally, ask a man who knows the community, and, of course, a man who can work with men, securing their confidence, and always maintaining their respect.

In conclusion gentlemen, I recommend to you the use of a Chaplain in our community department. The Chaplain should not be merely honorary. He should be "for real men who, yes, (a) are performing ceremonial functions, (b) instructional (c) counseling, and (d) community liaison.

The Chaplain that is selected ought to be a man who is busy, reflective, spiritual, and a community oriented person. One able to work with men. I think such a Chaplain can help us in tremendously important serving roles that is rendered to men in our society.

QUALIFICATIONS: The position of Chaplain should be on the same level as a supervisory position. Performed and carried out by an ordained minister in good and regular standing with the Church. In tune with the community, and has knowledge and understanding with police, their problems, and functions. One who is able to communicate with police and community. Further qualifications are that the Chaplain have at least 15 years of public experience, and be ordained by a recognized church affiliation, or a B.A. degree and ordained by a recognized church affiliation.

The salary of the Chaplain is recommended to be no less than that of a senior field lieutenant and no more than that of a senior field captain, with step raises awarded between lieutenant and captain.

This could be accomplished with minimum cost and with maximum efficiency if the Chaplain were appointed to be Chaplain of all police in Clark County and administer as a metropolitan Chaplain with an office centrally located.

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