Doctrines of the Chaplaincy
Ecumenism, Pluralism & Pragmatism
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I have been a member of the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) since 2000. I have had the privilege of meeting many wonderful chaplains, over the years, through my involvement with ICPC. Some share my faith in Jesus Christ. Others do not. The common denominator among most of the chaplains I have met (regardless of the chaplain's religious affiliation) is a genuine desire to provide care, support, and comfort to the law enforcement community. And they do so, not for the thrill, not for sermon illustrations, and not for personal recognition. They do it because they love the law enforcement family.

By and large, chaplains volunteer their time and sacrifice their personal resources in order serve the law enforcement family. Chaplains hurt when officers hurt, grieve when officers grieve, and rejoice when officers rejoice. Chaplains understand that serving the law enforcement community is a privilege, not a right.

Any chaplain that has had the privilege of being welcomed by officers as part of a station or department family will tell you that there are very few moments in their ministry that are as special and rewarding. Once a chaplain reaches this place of acceptance by the law enforcement family, they become an effective tool in an officer's war bag, serving as an officer's emotional "trauma plate"[1] during emotionally charged calls or times of personal struggle.

While the majority of members of ICPC profess faith in Christ, ICPC is not a Christian organization. This is not a judgment about the organization. It is simply a statement of fact. ICPC does not identify itself as a Christian ministry.

In the June 2000 issue of the ICPC Northwest Region newsletter, then ICPC President-Elect, Dan Nolta, wrote the following:

> At the Northwest Regional training session in Bend, Oregon *(April 10-11, 2000)*, I shocked some chaplains with this statement: "We are not a Christian organization, we are a professional chaplaincy organization."

> By that I meant, while I believe that the predominant faith group is some "brand" of Christianity, we are a professional organization whose constituents are police chaplains from a multiplicity of faith groups.[2]

In an article dealing with the issue of religious pluralism, Chaplain Jerry Montgomery affirms Chaplain Nolta's statement when he wrote:

> "ICPC is not a Christian-only organization; it serves chaplains from all religious traditions and is committed to serving the needs, especially in a moment of crisis, of every officer and every citizen when our services are requested.[3]

Recently, I attended the ICPC Southwest Region Annual Training Seminar, in Bakersfield, CA. For the last three years, I have had the honor and privilege of presenting a seminar, "The Law Enforcement Family," as part of the basic training curriculum for new chaplains.[4] I enjoy

attending and participating in these conferences because it is an excellent opportunity to connect and network with, minister to, and be encouraged by fellow chaplains.

During a seminar simply entitled "Ethics," The presenter showed the following PowerPoint slide, which provided a definition for "ecumenism," as it applies to the chaplain ministry.[5]

> The Chaplain's own personal convictions do not give him the right to disdain the faith of others, nor attempt to proselytize them for his own church. The Chaplain shall strive for an unbiased understanding of all faiths, and be acquainted with their liturgies. The Chaplain shall conduct himself in a manner that shall not offend any religious bodies, and shall attempt to win the goodwill of all.[6]

The assertions contained in the above statement, should lead the Christian reader to draw some rather obvious and troubling conclusions—conclusions that should serve as cause for significant concern in the hearts and minds of any chaplain that professes faith in Jesus Christ and affirms the truth of God's Word. According to ICPC's *Canon of Ethics*, if a chaplain makes evangelism an important aspect of his philosophy of ministry; if a chaplain is biased toward his own faith; if a chaplain offends a person of another faith (the assumption being that the chaplain's words, actions, and/or stated convictions caused the offense); and if a chaplain fails to try "win the goodwill of all," then the chaplain is categorized as unethical. In short, according to ICPC, if a chaplain does not affirm and propagate the organization's understanding of ecumenism and pluralism, the chaplain is unethical.

It may be helpful at this point to define and clarify a few of important terms—ecumenism, pluralism, and pragmatism.

Ecumenism

The word "ecumenism" comes from the Greek word, *oikoumenē* which means "the entire inhabited earth." The following definition of "ecumenism" is given in the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*:

> Ecumenism is the attempt to seek a worldwide unity and cooperation among all churches that confess Jesus Christ as Lord . . . In the early twentieth century various international missionary conferences explored the need for Christian unity if world evangelization were to be accomplished. This gave birth to the modern ecumenical movement. Positively, the ecumenical movement reaffirmed the need for all branches of Christianity to see their common roots and to seek unity where possible. Negatively, the ecumenical movement has often focused on political ideology; consequently, sectors of the Christian church have been hesitant to join in ecumenical dialogue.[7]

According to the above definition, "ecumenism" is the effort to bring people of faith together, through dialogue and service, who share faith in Jesus Christ. "Ecumenism," when defined theologically, does not extend to religious constructs outside Christianity.

ICPC's ecumenical efforts to foster cooperation and fellowship between various Christian denominations—denominations whose differences extend from extra-biblical tradition to the gospel itself, seems to resemble the ecumenical efforts of the World Council of Churches (WCC). "The federation model of the World Council of Churches tended to downplay the

necessity of doctrinal agreement and evangelism while stressing concerted social and political action in Christ's name."[8]

Although ecumenism is certainly present in law enforcement chaplaincy, the term "ecumenism," as it is used and demonstrated in law enforcement chaplaincy, is closer to the definition of "pluralism" than "ecumenism." And, in keeping with the spirit of this age, it seems that pluralism is of greater importance within chaplain circles than ecumenism.

Pluralism

Once again I turn to the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* for a definition of "pluralism."

> The advocacy and embrace of a social system that promotes the autonomy and ongoing development of diverse religions, ethnic, racial and social groups within the system. In theology, pluralism suggests that there are many paths to and expressions of truth about God and several equally valid means to salvation.[9]

Now, compare the above definition to the PowerPoint slide quoted earlier in this article.

> The Chaplain's own personal convictions do not give him the right to disdain the faith of others, nor attempt to proselytize them for his own church. The Chaplain shall strive for an unbiased understanding of all faiths, and be acquainted with their liturgies. The Chaplain shall conduct himself in a manner that shall not offend any religious bodies, and shall attempt to win the goodwill of all.

Whereas the intended definition of "ecumenism" encourages unity among professed Christians (assuming these various groups agree on essential Christian doctrine—namely, the gospel) for the purpose of evangelism, the definition of "pluralism" encourages anything but evangelism, in order to propagate the worldly belief that every religion has an equal level of legitimacy.

According to ICPC's *Canon of Ethics*, which mandates no evangelism, or bias, or speech that others may deem offensive, an ethical chaplain is therefore one who is pluralistic in his or her theology and philosophy of ministry. Yet, at the same time, ICPC asserts that the organization does not expect any chaplain to water-down his or her faith. Here is a statement from the retired Executive Director of ICPC, Chaplain Dave DeRevere.

> ICPC does not ask anyone to water down his or her faith. But it does preach respect for all people and their beliefs.

> Chaplaincy differs from being a pastor in that it is primarily a ministry of presence. Our role as a chaplain is to serve, not preach. We are a witness to our faith by our doing, caring and loving. When an officer asks why we do what we do, then the door is open to share our faith.[10]

It appears, based on the above statement by Chaplain DeRevere (which is a sentiment I have heard expressed by numerous chaplains over the years), that there is conflict between ICPC's stated *Canon of Ethics* and the organization's assertion that no chaplain is asked to compromise his or her faith. Many chaplains (maybe some who will eventually read this article) either do not recognize the conflict or choose to ignore its existence. And the philosophy of ministry to which many chaplains will turn to justify drawing no line in the sand between pluralism and spiritual compromise brings us to our third important term.

Pragmatism

Drawing one last time from the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, "pragmatism" is defined as:

> The philosophical system that assumes every truth or idea has practical consequences and that these practical consequences are a critical test of its truthfulness. Some pragmatists add that there are no transcendental sources of truth; therefore, truth and values are relative to their usefulness to either individuals or societies.[11]

I also found Pastor John MacArthur's thoughts regarding "pragmatism" helpful.

> *Pragmatism* is the notion that meaning or worth is determined by practical consequences. It is closely akin to *utilitarianism*, the belief that usefulness is the standard of what is good. To a pragmatists/utilitarian, if a technique or course of action had the desired effect, it is good. If it doesn't seem to work, it must be wrong.[12]

Again, I turn to Chaplain DeRevere's article about pluralism within the chaplaincy. Chaplain DeRevere cites Chaplain Jerry Montgomery extensively in his article. Chaplain Montgomery's words serve as an example of the above definitions of "pragmatism." According to Chaplain Montgomery:

> Chaplains serve the needs of every officer and every member of the public. In today's world, a chaplain advocating a particular religious perspective while working within a public agency probably would be in very hot legal water with his or her chief and the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.
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> Serving the needs of a Muslim, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Baptist, or mainline Protestant officer or citizen is difficult under the best of circumstances. Hurting or confronting them with a different religious perspective will cause problems. If a complaint were filed because that religious perspective was found to be offensive, all chaplains will be impacted negatively.[13]

If we take Chaplain Montgomery's words at face value, it would seem that he is advocating the setting aside of what a chaplain may understand to be biblical truth, or a mandate of his faith, in order to avoid "very hot legal water," grief from the chief, attention from the ACLU, receiving a complaint from an officer or member of the community, and the possibility of potential harm to the ministries of other chaplains. What other conclusion can we possibly draw from Chaplain Montgomery's statements? It appears, based on the above quote, that Chaplain Montgomery believes a chaplain cannot advocate "a particular religious perspective while working within a public agency."

Sadly, pragmatism has deep roots within law enforcement chaplain ministry. The level of acceptance a chaplain receives from a secular agency or community often serves as the barometer for gauging the success of a chaplain's ministry. This is not to say that chaplains do not need or should not desire the acceptance of the law enforcement community they are trying to serve. But, contrary to a pragmatic philosophy of ministry, the end does not always justify the means. Instead of standing for the truth at any cost, some Christian chaplains have chosen the path of least resistance, guarding their ministry and avoiding conflict at any cost. Along the way,

the bright line between truth and error is blurred, even ignored, with the appeasement of people, instead of the honoring and glorifying of God, becoming the inevitable "greater good."

Pastor John MacArthur wrote:

> "When pragmatism is used to make judgments about right and wrong, or when it becomes a guiding philosophy of life, theology, and ministry, inevitably it clashes with Scripture. Spiritual and biblical truth is not determined by testing what "works" and what doesn't. We know from Scripture, for example, that the gospel often does not produce a positive response (1 Cor. 1:22, 23; 2:14). On the other hand, satanic lies and deception can be quite effective (Matt. 24:23, 24; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4). Majority reaction is no test of validity (cf. Matt. 7:13, 14), and prosperity is no measure of truthfulness (cf. Job 12:6). Pragmatism as a guiding philosophy of ministry is inherently flawed."[14]

The Issue

This brings me to the purpose of this article. The issue is *not* ICPC's nonsectarian positions regarding ecumenism, pluralism, and pragmatism. Again, ICPC makes it very clear that the organization is not Christian by design and/or practice. Therefore, I no more expect ICPC, as an organization, to uphold the truths of Scripture than I expect the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to uphold the truths of Scripture. I no more expect ICPC, as an organization, to fulfill the Great Commission than I expect the LASD to begin teaching biblical evangelism classes in the academy. While ICPC is a spiritual organization and the LASD (and every other law enforcement agency) is a secular organization, they share the commonality of being non-Christian entities.

This being said, my goal in writing this paper is not to change the stated purposes or the philosophies of ministry of ICPC.

What troubles me is *not* that ICPC is a non-Christian organization. Nor am I troubled that there are non-Christian chaplains in ICPC or in the chaplaincy. I understand that the law enforcement family is diverse—comprised of many different faiths—and I do not begrudge my brothers and sisters behind the badge if they wish to have chaplains that practice their chosen beliefs. As is the case with chaplains, officers have the right to practice any religion they chose, or no religion at all.

What troubles me is that some chaplains within the organization who profess faith in Jesus Christ deny the truths of Scripture by applauding and promoting ecumenism and pluralism (terms which are used interchangeably within ICPC and chaplaincy in general), and rely on pragmatism to justify the practice.

I understand that using words such as "unbiblical" and "non-Christian," or phraseology such as "deny the truths of Scripture," when dealing with such sensitive subject matter as this, can solicit negative responses, especially from Christian chaplains who affirm ICPC's *Code of Ethics*. But all one must do to see that these words and phrases are not only appropriate but necessary is hold ICPC's *Code of Ethics* and the statements of individual chaplains up to the light of Scripture.

Let's consider the first two sentences of ICPC's statement regarding ecumenism and pluralism.

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The Chaplain's own personal convictions do not give him the right to disdain the faith of others, nor attempt to proselytize them for his own church. The Chaplain shall strive for an unbiased understanding of all faiths, and be acquainted with their liturgies.

I think it would be difficult to make a statement regarding evangelism (proselytizing) that is more *contrary* to the truth of God's Word than the above statement. The *right* to evangelize the lost, regardless of the setting, is neither given nor taken away by the rule or will of man.

Yes, the agencies and organizations of man can establish policies prohibiting evangelism. And, yes, there can be serious, personal consequences for defying the rules of man. However, one's pragmatic desire to appease man or to avoid conflict does not supersede the will and the Word of God. Christians, all Christians, are mandated by God's Word to be used as His earthen vessels, as *He* seeks and saves the lost (cf. Luke 19:10; 2 Cor. 4:1-10). The possible personal cost of the Christian's obedience to Christ in no way alleviates the Christian's responsibility to obey. But the Word of God can speak for itself.

> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20)

> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15)

> Therefore, to the one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Whereas ICPC, and sadly some individual chaplains professing faith in Christ, believe it is right to set aside personal, biblical convictions in order to keep in step with the world's view of ecumenism and pluralism, or to remain in compliance with the policies of man; the Apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that the Christian must remain faithful to his or her biblical convictions. "But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believe, therefore I spoke,' we also believe, therefore we also speak" (2 Cor. 4:13).

Pastor John MacArthur had this to say regarding the afore-mentioned verse.

> Paul's desire for fruitfulness did not mean that he would compromise the gospel message. He would remain true to his convictions and preach what he knew to be true.

> The apostle declared that he had the same spirit or attitude of faith—in other words, he believed in the same thing—as what is written. That is, he agreed with the psalmist who wrote, "I believed, therefore I spoke" (Ps. 116:20). That was Paul's response to critics of his bold preaching. His unwavering faith compelled him to preach (cf. Rom. 1:15; 1 Cor. 9:16); it was impossible for him to believe the gospel truth but not long to proclaim it. Those who lack conviction in their preaching do so because they lack conviction in their hearts. Because they have weak confidence in the truth of God, they seek the comfort, prestige, and popularity that come from muting the message. True belief impels strong,

consistent, unwavering testimony to the truth . . . Those who genuinely believe the truth cannot help but to speak that truth.[15]

ICPC's choice of words when it comes to a chaplain's views of other faiths is interesting. The *Canon of Ethics* states that chaplains do not have "the right to disdain the faith of others." Noah Webster defined "disdain" this way.

> Contempt; scorn; a passion excited in noble minds, by the hatred or detestation of what is mean and dishonorable, and implying a consciousness of superiority of mind, or a supposed superiority.[16]

Christians know that it is sinful to hate another person. "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). However, the Christian *should* disdain anything that offends God—namely, sin (always looking to one's own heart first). The Christian *should* disdain anything that is dishonorable to God. What could be more dishonorable to God than the sinful refusal to worship Him as the one, true God?

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
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> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen (Romans 1:18-25).

The Scriptures are clear. One cannot worship God unless he or she first knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God (John 3:16-21).

Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:44).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:6-11).

To accept other religions as equal to biblical Christianity when, by faith and conviction, one knows in his or her heart that there is but one Way to God—one Way to eternal life—is to deny the truth of God's Word and to deny faith in Christ. For the Christian, accepting the pluralistic spirit of the age, which includes the notion that there are many ways to God, is to agree with the Apostle Peter when he was at his lowest spiritual point.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?" He denied *it*, and said, "I am not."

One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" Peter therefore denied *it* again; and immediately a cock crowed (John 18:25-27).

The adage that says, "Love the sinner, yet hate the sin" applies to those who practice religions that are contrary to the Word of God—religions that do not lead to eternal life, but to eternal separation from God in hell. In keeping with the truth of this maxim, the most loving thing the Christian can do for those belonging to other religions (whether the person is a street cop, the Chief of Police, another chaplain, or the stranger on the street), or for those belonging to no religion at all, is to obey the God-given command to share the gospel of Jesus Christ—speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), with gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15).

The Christian *must* be biased toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment the Christian acquiesces to the pluralistic spirit of the age by supporting the notion that there is more than one God, or by supporting the notion that other religions worship the one, true God in different ways while denying the deity and sovereignty of Jesus Christ; the Christian has committed the sin of idolatry.

You shall have no other gods before Me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth

generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain (Exodus 20:3-7).

The last sentence in ICPC's *Canon of Ethics* statement regarding ecumenism and pluralism reads as follows:

The Chaplain shall conduct himself in a manner that shall not offend any religious bodies, and shall attempt to win the goodwill of all.

The speech of a Christian should always be wholesome and edifying (Eph. 4:29), always with grace, as if it were seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6). But the content of the message (the gospel) should never change because people may not like it, or because people of other religions may take offense to it. How an unsaved person may respond to the gospel should not determine whether or not the gospel is proclaimed and defended. While one cannot help but think of the possible negative consequences for standing firm for Christ in the midst of a lost and dying world, Scripture does not give the Christian the luxury of applying worldly pragmatics or situational ethics in an attempt to justify not speaking the truth in love.

They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death, and you will be hated by all on account of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives (Luke 21:12-19).

As far as trying to win the goodwill of all men (presumably by adhering to the pragmatic practices of ecumenism and pluralism), the Christian must submit to the truth of God's Word as the final court of arbitration. I am reminded of the story of Peter and John standing tall before the high priest.

And when they had placed them in the center, they *began to* inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, *but* WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone.* And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:7-12).

And,

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27-29).

Yes, God's Word instructs the Christian with these words. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18). And if we have offended our brother we should first be reconciled to him, before coming to God's throne in worship (Matt. 5:23-24). But man's reconciliation to man is always secondary to man's reconciliation to God.

Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation (Rom. 5:6-11).

Conclusion

Ecumenism (as defined by many present-day religious groups), pluralism, and pragmatism are clearly antithetical to Scripture. Followers of Jesus Christ who choose to serve the law enforcement family as chaplains must daily wade through these philosophical minefields, knowing that any biblical stand for Christ made while serving as a chaplain can have serious repercussions—both personally and ministerially. Sadly, some chaplains have bowed (knowingly or unknowingly) to the pressures of the world and/or wantonly have accepted the pluralistic spirit of the age. Some have done so thinking they are honoring Christ and His gospel by intentionally making no mention of Him to the men and women they feel called to serve.

Chaplain Jerry Montgomery wrote (as quoted by Chaplain DeRevere):

In my several decades of chaplaincy and ministry, I never have found it necessary to tell anyone about my own religious experience, even though once in a while I find myself in an opportunity where I could initiate an evangelism conversation. I'm not selling a religion, I'm serving the needs of a hurting person so I never worry about 'sales totals' and I never initiate an evangelism conversation. This does not diminish my Christian commitment; it strengthens it. My ordination vows included a vow to serve persons of other faith traditions, including those of no religious faith.

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Once a crisis is past, my service to them is completed and trust is established, those officers and citizens who are at a point of asking may ask - and sometimes do - about the source of strength that undergirds my service to them. My service to them probably was secular and practical in nature; the reason why I do such work is a separate issue. When they ask, I'm delighted.

When they ask, it's legal. When I tell them before they ask, my actions probably are illegal.

One of the reasons I am so committed to ICPC is that in the years of my membership, I've learned from so many other chaplains that they, too, have come to that same basic conclusion as a result of their practice of this specialized ministry. The conclusion is true for Jewish chaplains, Roman Catholic chaplains, Muslim chaplains, Lutheran and United Church of Christ chaplains, and Southern Baptist and Evangelical Free Methodist chaplains. When any of us serve an officer or citizen; we all work alike, we all help alike. Our service to them is witness of the strength of our faith. We don't need to say anything at all.[17]

As a law enforcement chaplain and reserve deputy sheriff, I serve and work with men and women who are cut from many different spiritual cloths. I likewise serve and work with men and women who profess no faith in God whatsoever. I have not, nor will I ever, turn away one of my brothers or sisters behind the badge in their emotional, physical, or spiritual time of need because they may not share my faith in Christ. "Back-up" is only a call away no matter who they are or what they believe. I love my law enforcement family.

However, I love Jesus Christ more. I cannot, in good conscience, provide my brothers and sisters behind the badge with band-aids for mortal wounds. It is because of my love for Jesus Christ and my love for my fellow officers (cf. Mark 12:28-31) that I must proclaim the gospel to those who are bound for hell apart from His saving grace.

I would not allow a brother or sister officer to walk up to a car during a traffic stop, knowing the occupant was armed and determined to kill my partner, without warning him or her of the danger—without doing whatever I could to keep my partner out of harm's way. The passenger officer in a two-person patrol unit is responsible for checking for oncoming traffic to the right of the patrol car. If my partner and I were to enter an intersection and I, as the passenger officer, saw a speeding car coming at us from our right, I would not sit there and say nothing. I would yell, "Car, right!"

Yes, chaplaincy is a ministry of presence; but it is not a ministry of *silence*. I cannot, in good conscience and obedience to my Lord, sit idly by and watch my brothers and sisters behind the badge die and go to hell because they did not repent of their sin and believe, by faith, in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. This notion that Christian chaplains should wait to be asked about their faith or, in some way, need permission from the unsaved before sharing their faith is contrary to Scripture.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). It is not ecumenism, pluralism, pragmatism, my silence, or my service to officers that saves anyone. It is *the gospel*; it is *the word of Christ* that contains the power of God for salvation. To remove the gospel from any Christian ministry, including the chaplaincy, is to remove Christ from the ministry.

So, as a law enforcement chaplain I will continue to seek opportunities to preach and proclaim the gospel of my Lord Jesus Christ—whether in a patrol car, locker room, across a restaurant table, at a crime scene, or at any other critical incident. The only thing that will stop me from sharing the good news of Jesus Christ will be my own sinful disobedience, or my failure to see the opportunity the Lord has placed in front of me. I cannot allow the fear of man (Ps. 118:6) or the appeasement of man (Col. 3:22-24) to deter me from sharing the gospel with those who need to hear it.

Can applying what I believe to be a biblical philosophy of ministry one day cost me my position as a chaplain? Yes. Will it? I don't know. What I do know is this. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). Because it is Christ whom I must serve first and foremost, then I must obey the Canons of Scripture before I obey man's Canon of Ethics.

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[1] The "trauma plate" is a piece of Kevlar composite that fits into an officer's bullet-resistant vest cover, providing additional protection over the officer's heart.

[2] Chaplain Dan Nolta. "Is ICPC An Organization Of Professional Chaplains With Many Faiths Or A Church?", http://www.icpc4cops.org/icpc_09h.html, June 2000.

[3] Chaplain Dave DeRevere, "Serving as a Chaplain Within the Religious Pluralism of the United States", http://www.icpc4cops.org/icpc_pluralism.html, June 2004.

[4] A PowerPoint presentation of this seminar can be obtained by contacting Chaplain Tony Miano, through Ten-Four Ministries (www.TenFourMinistries.org).

[5] This PowerPoint Presentation, "Ethics for Chaplains—A Guide to Live By," was developed by the Chaplain Corps of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

[6] International Conference of Police Chaplains. "Canon of Ethics for Law Enforcement Chaplains", *as published in the "ICPC Handbook"*, http://www.icpc4cops.org/icpc_09b.html, date unknown

[7] Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki & Cherith Fee Nordling. "Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms" (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p.43.

[8] Walter A. Elwell, editor. "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology," (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1984), p.342. A brief history of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is given under the sub-heading *The Modern Ecumenical Movement*, p. 341.

[9] Grenz. Ibid. p. 92.

[10] DeRevere. Ibid.

[11] Grenz. Ibid, p. 93-94.

[12] John MacArthur. "Ashamed of the Gospel—When the Church Becomes Like the World", (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), p. xii.

[13] DeRevere. Ibid.

[14] MacArthur. Ibid. p. xiii.

[15] John MacArthur. "The MacArthur New Testament Commentary—2 Corinthians", (Chicago: Moody Press, 2003), pp. 146-47).

[16] Noah Webster. "American Dictionary of the English Language", (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, reprinted 2000), vol. 1, p. 62.

[17] DeRevere. Ibid.