



# Cowlitz Chaplaincy

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*A non-profit organization serving Emergency Service Responders and Citizens since 1983*

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## HOW ABOUT YOUR HEART?

As I am starting this first letter of 2010, I am gazing out the window of the Cannon Beach Conference Center beholding the majestic waves of the Pacific Ocean. The sky is slate gray and the waves are churning the water as they roll into the beach. There are signs of an approaching storm with all the challenges that accompany it. Hundreds of seagulls circling at the water's edge complete the picture I see.



Sometimes our lives are like the churning sea. So many issues bombarding us and stirring up our lives until we feel battered and bruised. Where do we find relief? Where can we go for comfort and shelter from the storms of life?

**Psalm 94:22 "...The LORD has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge."**

As chaplains, we are God's hands extended to those who are hurting; to those who are battered and bruised from life's stormy seas.

At this year's conference we have been reminded of the

essential need to take care of ourselves, too. As chaplains we experience the effects of the traumas we encounter on each call we make. We share your pain and grief.

We are so grateful that we can turn to our loving Lord and Savior for the strength and courage needed for each call we make so that we, in turn, can be there for you.

How is your heart today? Are you one that has encountered the angry waves of hurt and grief? Are you battered by the storms of life? Do you have an anchor that holds? Our anchor is in our Lord and it holds fast even in rough waters. It is our prayer as your chaplains that your anchor is secure, trusting in God for safe harbor when the storms of life threaten.

## TRAUMA AT CHRISTMAS

**Miriam and I were enjoying the quiet afternoon the 25<sup>th</sup> of December preparing for the arrival of the Coeur d'Alene contingent of our family. It was about 4:30 PM when the Comm. Center called informing me that we had critical accident at one of our mill sights. The next of kin family member needed to be notified that a loved one was missing. A Deputy and I made the notification and I was given the task to help the family. For the next four days I dealt with trauma, the**

**emotions, and turf barriers. It was a very exhausting time. A terrible accident which took the life of a young man in the prime of his life and will forever be a scar for a family to remember.**

## WELCOME

Well, the past few months have been quite interesting. I have had the opportunity to work with some amazing people, not the least of which are the Cowlitz County Sheriff's chaplains and the members of the Chaplaincy Board.

With Bill Mahoney's retirement, I stepped on to the board as his replacement. I began with a strong desire to see my father's vision continue. (My father, retired sheriff Les Nelson, started the Chaplaincy in the early 80's) I'm highly pleased to be part of providing this service to the citizens of Cowlitz County.

To help this process along, the board has been blessed with two new volunteer chaplains; Mario Gambaro and "Flip" Eiland. These two men bring the necessary integrity and the heart to serve to the chaplaincy.

So, on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, and if the board will allow, the board of the Cowlitz County Chaplaincy, welcome Flip and Mario.

Be blessed,  
Sheriff Mark Nelson

## TRAINING

Larry Bennett, Steve and Carmen White, Flip and Crystal Eiland, and Miriam and Lyle Prather attended the



ICPC (International Conference of Police Chaplains) at The Cannon Beach Conference Center. This year, as it is every year, the conference presented good speakers and subjects that we can apply to our outreach when we respond to the many calls each year. Because of the tragedies in the State of Washington involving Police Officers being killed in the line of duty, a major theme was dealing with stress on the job. We had a time where we were able to minister to the Chaplains who had to deal the shootings and subsequent funerals and the emotionally hurt officers and families.

Another major topic dealt with post traumatic stress experienced by returning vets. We learned techniques to help these individuals and to help defuse potential hostile encounters between law enforcement and returning vets. It appears that there are a number of challenges with which the police are being confronted when dealing with our recent veterans.

All in all we had a very informed, refreshing, and pleasurable time.

## FEBRUARY

Can you believe we are in the second month of the year 2010 there are only a few more months until Christmas? *Steve and I want to once again express our deepest thanks for your faithfulness to the Chaplaincy this past year. Two thousand-ten is a new year and it is starting out with new challenges. January's donations were really down. Please keep us in your thoughts and may you be able to continue your generous support so we can be equipped to meet the needs that each pager and phone call bring. Your dollars make it possible for us to respond; your prayers and financial willingness make up the oil that KEEPS the chaplaincy engine running.*

### Fundraiser Breakfast

April 24<sup>th</sup>, the last Saturday of the month, our annual Fundraiser Breakfast will once again be at the EXPO CENTER.

We could really use your expertise in obtaining objects for the auction. This year we are planning to open it for more public involvement so we can broaden our financial base. Doing so means that we need many more items for the auction than we had last year. If you can help us in this endeavor please call the Chaplaincy Office 360-425-7222 and Steve or I will be able to coordinate your input.

May our Lord bless each of you and I pray that His windows of heaven be open to pour out a rich monetary blessing in your lives.

*Chaplain Lyle*

**CHAPLAINCY FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup>**

**AT THE**

**EXPO CENTER**

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As I sit here today I'm about to begin year # 9 as a Police/Fire Chaplain. In so many ways this "journey" began nearly 40 years ago after my



return from Vietnam. iam

It was then I discovered Jesus and shortly after surrendered to full-time ministry. Most of my friends back then were King County Deputies and I thought I would pursue a career in Law Enforcement. After God got a hold of me I remember telling my friends I was going to become a minister and not a cop. They thought I had 'lost my mind' – but my best friend (Bruce Morrison) said, **"Who knows Steve, maybe someday you'll be our chaplain."**

Speed forward now to January 2002 when LPD Sgt Ken Johnson (now Chief Johnson of Fairview, OR) came to me and asked if I would consider being Longview PD's Chaplain. Suddenly the memory of that conversation in 1972 with my friend Bruce came back to me – **"maybe someday you'll be our chaplain."** Long story short, I accepted the offer made by then Chief Burgreen and began as a volunteer chaplain with LPD. It's been a wild ride ever since – especially after I left the Church I pastored in June 2003 and went full-time as Police Chaplain – adding Kelso and Castle Rock PD's to my "bag". Shortly after I picked up

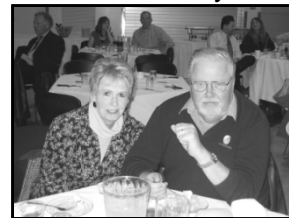
Longview Fire and Castle Rock Fire as agencies.

I would be lying if I told you that it's been all fun and games since then – it hasn't. There's been many, many challenges along the way. The time demands of the job and the kind of issues I get called out on are all full of challenges and difficult at best most of the time. But I believe God planted some things in me nearly 40 years ago that He's been able to use these past 8 years. I've learned so much these past 8 years and been privileged to work alongside some of the finest men and women that walk the face of this earth. Not taking anything away from my years as a Church Pastor, I think I've done more "kingdom work" these past 8 years than all the other years as a pastor.

That's not to say that being pastor of a church is easier than being a chaplain is – far from it – I think pastoring a church is THE HARDEST JOB in the world today. What I would say is that being a chaplain provides different opportunities to see God work in people's lives. Most pastors never get the chance to 'walk' where I have walked. There are certainly the 'fringe benefits' of things like riding around in a patrol car lights and siren – going to the gun range – hanging out with cops & firefighters. But with those benies come the calls in the dead of night to tell someone their loved one has died – walking a family through the tragedy of teen suicide – holding a mother whose infant has drowned – helping a family face the horrors of homicide. All of that comes with the job.

We just recently brought on a couple new volunteers to help us out at Cowlitz Chaplaincy. Mario Gambaro and Flip Eiland are a good addition to the team. They come to us with great backgrounds (Mario was a former police officer and Flip has been part of Search & Rescue for several years). But they are "green" when it comes to Chaplaincy work. We are providing them with training and easing them into the operation, but they are still "rookies." What I am asking from you readers this month is that, in the same way many of you prayed for me when I began my career as a Chaplain, I ask you now to commit to pray for Mario and Flip. They too will be 'walking where I walk' in the coming months and they will need God's strength and hope as they go out and serve just as I do. My prayer is that 8 years from now they will be able to say like me today; **"I do what I love and love what I do."**

For those of you who have supported me with your prayers and finances over these past few years, I can't thank you enough. Without you I would not be able to do what I do. And on this 'sort of' anniversary time, I would be extremely remiss if I did not say a special thank you to my wife, Carmen.



She has put up with many lonely times when I was called away to serve others. She is my biggest fan and I

love her with all my heart – THANK YOU CARM FOR LOVING ME! May God fill 2010 with joy and grace each and every day. Shalom!

*Chap Steve*