



Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission

Christian Churches and Churches of Christ

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**POLICIES FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINS
(ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE/NATIONAL GUARD)
ENDORSED BY THE CHAPLAINCY ENDORSEMENT COMMISSION
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND CHURCHES OF CHRIST
REVISED FEBRUARY 2018**

BACKGROUND:

In the institutional setting, our Chaplains are categorized with Chaplains from other Christian faith traditions under the familiar heading know as “General Protestant”. This phenomenon has evolved within the institutional setting in an attempt to identify those Chaplains whose religious practice differs from the Roman Catholic, Jewish and Islamic faith persuasion. In the General Protestant categorization, there currently exist three sub-categories: (1) liturgical (2) non-liturgical (those who practice infant baptism and those who do not, and (3) those who are of non-Trinitarian tradition. This categorizing raises two significant issues for our Chaplains.

1. One of the challenging aspects of ministry in a pluralistic environment involves maintaining the integrity of our faith tradition and how we present ourselves to those we serve. Our Chaplains are considered “non-liturgical” in that we are “non-denominational”, baptize (immerse) penitent believers and partake in the Lord’s Supper weekly.
2. In the “General Protestant” worship services, our Chaplains co-conduct worship with other Chaplains who are placed under the same umbrella. This relationship is logical, works well under most circumstances, builds collegiality and bridges gaps; however, on occasion, our Chaplains experience difficulties when they are directed to co-conduct worship with Chaplains who do not subscribe to the Trinitarian nature of God and do not come to the communion table as concelebrants.

A. POLICIES BASED ON ESSENTIAL DOCTRINAL BELIEFS FOR CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS:

1. Our Chaplains will co-conduct worship with other Protestant Chaplains of the Trinitarian faith tradition. They cannot be required to co-conduct or participate in any type of worship service with Chaplains representing groups outside the orthodox Trinitarian tradition.

2. The Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission (CEC) expects that its endorsed chaplains and counselors will minister to all persons, perform their chaplaincy ministry in a manner representative of local churches affiliated with the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, provide baptism by immersion, serve the Lord's Supper regularly, and conduct ministry in an environment of diversity of religious beliefs and expressions through "cooperation without compromise." The Christian Churches and Churches of Christ celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday and expect the Chaplains to celebrate by using the elements of the fruit of the vine (non-alcohol). Non-alcoholic wine or grape juice will be offered in addition to wine at communion services where our Chaplains officiate.

3. Chaplains/Counselors endorsed by the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission (CEC) must be team players. They are to facilitate the religious needs of all those under their care. They must understand the principles that make up a pluralistic environment. Chaplains/Counselors are to be spiritually fit and they are to be loyal, show respect and demonstrate integrity to their superiors and to themselves.

4. Marriage is a sacred ordinance of God. Our Chaplains/Counselors will consider each request for marriage on a case by case basis and will conduct marriage ceremonies for those who meet the individual Chaplain's guideline and have received adequate pre-marital instruction in advance of the ceremony. When officiating at a marriage ceremony, our chaplains should decide if the marriage meets the expectations of the Bible. Homosexual marriages are clearly not biblical. Our chaplains have the right to refuse to marry couples who are cohabitating, and individuals who have a history of multiple divorces. **We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)**

5. **We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image of God within that person. Our Chaplains will not do anything to encourage or enable such a rejection.**

6. Our chaplains are expected to live their personal and professional lives with integrity, always remembering that they are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Chaplains are expected to be honest and genuine in all their words and actions. A chaplain's personal character must be consistent with spiritual leadership. Chaplains minister by example. **We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that**

every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

7. Chaplains/Counselors from the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ are like all ordained ministers serving in the local parish. In that capacity, our Chaplains/Counselors are endorsed and empowered by the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission to serve in the capacity of Chaplains/Counselors within their various institutions. As a result, they serve in a dual capacity – fully members of the clergy and as members of their institution. Because American society is constantly changing and evolving and because issues may arise which place Christian doctrine in conflict with secular standards, we offer the following expectations of our chaplains:

- a. We expect our chaplains to be ready to minister to all persons, regardless of those persons' behavior choices, ethnicity, physical condition/presence, or religious preference. In providing this ministry the chaplain is neither condoning nor approving of behaviors the Bible defines as sinful, for example: drunkenness, fornication, homosexuality, or abortion. The chaplain's ministry will be to understand the person's spiritual need and either minister or refer the person to more appropriate resources. A chaplain is not obligated to refer a person to a resource that will cause the chaplain to serve as an enabler in the continuance of the sinful behavior. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.
- b. When conducting worship services, Bible studies, or counseling, chaplains will be guided by the Bible.
- c. When "co-pastor" assignments are made, our chaplains should be assigned to co-pastor congregations with chaplains whose faith and practice is congruent with Christian Churches and Churches of Christ faith and practice.
 - (1) Assignment consideration can range from practical considerations (for instance, liturgical and free church worship styles do not mix well), to innate theological differences (between, for example, Christian Science and Christian Churches and Churches of Christ chaplains), and fundamental moral issues (which would exist, for example, between an openly homosexual or transgender chaplain and a Christian Churches and Churches of Christ chaplain). Our endorsed chaplains should not be required to share the pulpit or engage in other specifically religious ministry functions with chaplains who are openly and unrepentantly engaged in immoral sexual behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, persons engaged in adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, or use of pornographic materials.
 - (2) For assistance with ministry assignments, the chaplain or supervisor may consult his/her supervisory chaplain, a senior Christian Churches or Churches of Christ chaplain in the area, or the Executive Director of the CEC.

- d. General training which the chaplain may be requested/directed to conduct should be compatible with the clear teachings of the Bible. This includes, for example, marriage enrichment, character education, or life skills training.
 - (1) Conducting training which endorses, for example, **transgender behavior**, alcohol abuse, polygamy, other immoral forms of “marriage”, homosexuality, child abuse, or fornication, would be inappropriate for a Christian Churches and Churches of Christ chaplain.
 - (2) Chaplains should attend any training they are assigned to attend. The Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission does not see this attendance as affirming the content of the training.
- e. Questions or concerns about utilization of chaplains endorsed by the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ should be referred to the Executive Director of the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission.

B. POLICIES CONCERNING NON-DOCTRINAL ISSUES FOR CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS:

1. Chaplains/Counselors will keep the Executive Director of the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission informed of vital information such as: job status, address, telephone number, any change in family status, etc. Ministry Reports will be submitted to the Executive Director semi-annually (April and October).
2. Chaplains/Counselors will fellowship with nearby Christian Churches and Churches of Christ and visit Bible Colleges/Seminaries whenever and wherever possible to share their ministry.
3. Chaplains/Counselors are co-partners in an annual “Fair Share” financial contribution to the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission (CEC). A “Fair Share” contribution is considered important for continual endorsement by the CEC. The Commission considers an annual contribution, as stated below, as the beginning figure for a “Fair Share” partnership that should increase according to position. The CEC appreciates the support of those endorsed by the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. Consider your contributions to the CEC to be a vital part of the continuing ministry of Chaplaincy.
 - a. **Annual beginning Fair Share of \$500.00 (Full-time Chaplains/Counselors).**
 - b. **Annual beginning Fair Share of \$250.00 (Part-time Chaplains/Counselors).**
4. Chaplains/Counselors are to attend the annual North American Christian Convention (NACC). Participation in the NACC and relative Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission activities is a professional and spiritual requirement; however, we understand that there may be circumstances that prevent you from attending. Those who are unable to attend are to inform the Executive Director accordingly, so we can plan for meetings and social gatherings. When attending the NACC they are expected to participate in CEC activities, to include meetings and the CEC display booth.

5. Chaplains/Counselors who do not meet the above requirements will have their endorsement automatically evaluated by the Board of Commissioners at the annual Commissioners' meeting.

C. CONCLUSION:

1. This document is designed to protect and continue the faith group integrity of Chaplains/Counselors endorsed by the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

2. This document assumes that our Chaplains/Counselors will act as responsible and faithful representatives of God and of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ in the performance of their assigned duties.