

"TURNING THOSE IN CRISIS TOWARD CHRIST"

Emergency Chaplains

FEBRUARY 2023



LOOKING BACK—LOOKING AHEAD

By: Ralph Thompson, Executive Director

I've been spending a lot of time over the past few weeks evaluating the work that we have done since April of 2008. We are closing in on our 15th anniversary. Wow. Time flies when you're having fun....but I'm also finding out that time flies even faster as you get older.

It's relatively easy to trip down memory lane and remember the successful work you have accomplished. It's even easier to remember the failures, especially if you're somewhat of a perfectionist. Honestly, I don't see myself that way, but there is a certain lady in my life that tells me that I have a little bit of a problem in this area.

But in God's economy, He doesn't measure us by success or failure....and there is absolutely no way that He would ever be impressed by my amateur perfectionism.

In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel, confronted King Saul and said, **"Tell me, does the Lord really want sacrifices and offerings? No! He doesn't want your sacrifices. He wants you to obey Him."** (CEV)

That timeless truth came front and center for me as I have been evaluating the work of EChap...**"He wants you to obey Him."**

That truth should be a constant measuring standard for every believer. Am I truly living an obedient life? Am I seeking to fully obey God's Word and all that He has revealed to me and entrusted me with?

I went back and pulled one of our first newsletters to remind myself of this 'calling' to start Emergency Chaplains. Carter and I spent several months praying in 2007. We believed that God was calling us to move away from church ministry to start Emergency Chaplains. This is what I wrote in July 2008, just 6 months after we stepped out in faith to start this journey:



Ralph and Carter Thompson in 2008

Goals and Dreams
Public Safety workers (Law Enforcement, Fire Fighters, EMTs and 911 Communicators) are the primary reason that Emergency Chaplains exists. Our goal is to provide pastoral care and biblical counseling for these public servants who willingly give up their lives for the sake of the citizens of Durham.

We will minister to the workers and their family members by getting to know them on a personal basis and discovering their needs. We will provide stress debriefing, job counseling, marriage and family counseling and offer spiritual guidance to those who desire it.

In addition to providing emotional and spiritual care for those who work in Public Safety, we will intervene in times of crisis for the general public of Durham County by providing on-the-scene pastoral care and crisis intervention in conjunction with local Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement and other emergency response agencies. This will be accomplished by responding to crisis scenes, ministering to victims and families, following the scene as it transitions to the hospital or other

locations and providing for the spiritual and emotional needs for victims, families and emergency personnel.

Our goal is to provide 24/7 coverage and response by the end of 2008. That will be accomplished by recruiting and training a group of dedicated volunteer chaplains who will commit to this ministry.

When we wrote our ministry plan back in February [2008], our BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) was to provide training and assistance to every county in NC to begin a county-wide chaplaincy program. Since then we have added another goal. Carter and I believe that the Lord is calling us to establish a regional counseling center for Public Safety Workers and their families. This dream calls for office space, paid and volunteer counselors and cooperation from individuals, local churches and businesses. We will tell you more about what we do and the vision that God has given us in later issues. Please remember to pray for us when you can.

I don't share this with you to try and convince you that I have accomplished something. Instead, I am writing this out again as a way to remind me of what I know the Lord has called me to do. And I am writing this down for you...and asking you to hold me accountable in staying the course that the Lord Jesus has laid before me.

Please pray for me as Paul prayed for the Colossians (Col 1:9-13). Pray for me to be filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding; that I will live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God; that I would be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that I will have great endurance and patience.

**Emergency Chaplains | PO Box 14762 | RTP, NC 27709
919.399.9468 | Office@EChap.org | EChap.org**

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PARTNER WITH EMERGENCY CHAPLAINS TO MINISTER TO FIRST RESPONDERS AND TO PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Join the EChap Prayer Team. Pray for our First Responders, Public Safety Agencies, and our Chaplains.

EChap.org/pray

Prayerfully consider becoming a chaplain.

The need is growing.

We can provide the training.

EChap.org/training

Give monthly to Emergency Chaplains.

Keep us on the field to serve First Responders and citizens in crisis.

EChap.org/donate

EChap Core Training

Do you sense God's call on your life to minister to those in your neighborhood, at work, or other places you go? Take the next step with EChap Core Training!

- Learn at your own pace—All Online
- 12 Courses in Program—Total Cost: \$120
- Get more information at: EChap.org/training

Call or email with questions
Office@EChap.org—(919) 399-9468

Core Training will give you the skills and the confidence you need to build caring relationships with the hope of gaining permission to share the life changing Good News of Jesus in a non-threatening manner.

Free Seminar for Churches/Small Groups

Intentional Neighboring

Responding to Everyday Crisis, Everyday

Prepare those in your group to engage friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and even strangers with the love and comfort of Christ in difficult times.

We will provide this training event exclusively for your church or small group.

Contact Chaplain Ralph for info: (919) 280-8908

GREEN BERETS OF THE PASTORAL ARMY

You may be familiar with the Green Berets of the US Army. They are highly skilled and trained for special operations. They spend much of their time practicing and a lot of time doing 'routine' duties...then the call comes in, and they spring into action. Green Berets take care of the jobs that no one else can.

Emergency Chaplains are the 'Green Berets' of the pastoral army. We may not be in the same physical shape as our military counterparts, but we are highly skilled and trained for special operations. We spend time practicing our skills and taking care of routine tasks...and then the call comes in. The chaplain then springs into action and takes care of the jobs that no one else can.

Calls can come anytime...day or night. Some days there are no calls at all. Sometimes calls come in two or three at a time. No matter how often or when the calls come, we immediately go and help those who are in trouble.

One of our chaplains wrote this regarding a difficult call

The call regarding the 33 year old man found dead came in early one morning. Although I have attended countless families during similar circumstances, the time that I spent on that scene stretched every area of training that I had under my belt.

That morning found me face-to-face with a young widow and a fatherless child. Last night, they had enjoyed time together as a family. This morning they awakened to sudden, unexpected terror. In the blink of an eye, one is now a widow and the other is fatherless.

Our paramedics had discontinued CPR just prior to my arrival and were waiting for me. They gave me a briefing and took me into the next room where we delivered the death notification to the man's wife.

For the next three hours I rode the emotional roller coaster with this family. Denial...anger...bargaining...acceptance...back to denial and through the cycle again...and again...and again. If you have ever been through anything like this, you understand. If not, you don't.

I made phone calls. I greeted neighbors. I took phone messages. I gave family members directions over the phone while they drove. I held her while she cried. I listened to her when she asked how God could let this happen. I stood there while she pounded on my chest and demanded that I call the paramedics back to help her husband.

God gave me a special privilege to minister to this Christian family in Jesus' Name during the greatest crisis they have ever experienced.

A couple of weeks later, in my follow up with the young widow, she remembered the raw moments of that morning but she wanted to thank me for being there with her. She believes that God sent me to take care of her in her time of distress. I believe that God sent me there, too.