



## Chaplain's Corner

### The Use of The Clergy Shirt in the Ministry

Recently I attended a class entitled “The Modern Chaplain.” It was taught by Dr. Allen Rudnick a Baptist Minister and Hospital Chaplain. His education and experience gave great insight into how to better connect with patients and people in need in various situations.

It was during this class that it was highly recommended that all clergy members doing the work of a chaplain should wear a clergy shirt.

For those who are versed in denominationalism or Protestant traditions, you know that majority of Baptist ministers do not wear **clergy collars**. Those funny looking white tabs or rounded white collars that ministers wear are most identified with Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran traditions.

If collars are not required for Baptist ministers or not a part of the Baptist tradition, what is a Baptist doing wearing one?

Many evangelical Christians scoff at the idea of a Chaplain wearing a **clergy collar**, especially a Baptist. A collar is too Catholic, right? It's not. Actually, it was a protestant minister who created the collar. The Rev. Donald Mcleod, a Scottish minister invented the detachable clerical collar in 1894, as a symbol to represent an ordained minister, though other forms existed before 1894.

At first I was very reluctant to wear the shirt because I use to be a member of the Catholic Church. When I first wore one to Greenville Hospital Emergency Room the reaction was overwhelming. I immediately noticed that I did not have to explain myself, my role, who I was, or what I was doing. I was also never mistaken for a police officer (as has happened in the past). The majority of people understood I was a chaplain visiting a sick or injured patient. I

also discovered that many surprising courtesies were given: helpful pointers, extended visitation time, access to sensitive areas of the hospital and quality time with hospital staff.

Wearing a collar is not something I take lightly. It is not something I wear for show or for respect. Just as a police officer wears a uniform, or a doctor wears a lab coat, ministers wear collars as a way to identify their purpose. Some think a clergy collar is a deterrent, but, I have found, it is actually a conversation starter. Many at the nursing homes, hospitals, or on the street have asked me questions about faith or wanted prayer.

In a culture where symbols and images are highly valued, a **clergy collar** is a way to communicate that a pastor is present and open to ministering to the needs of others. It creates access rather than separation. Wearing a collar allows others to know that a clergy person is there not for themselves, As Christ reminded his disciples, the Son of Man “did not come to be served, but to serve.” As a Chaplain the clergy collar is a way to better be Identified in various circumstances as a servant.

The clergy shirt I wear is royal blue with the BFD crest and embroidered with the words “Protestant Chaplain.” If wearing the Class A jacket I will have a navy blue clergy shirt also bearing the BFD Crest and the words “Protestant Chaplain;”

### **Upcoming**

Thursday Night Bible Study From 7:00 to 8:00 PM.

**Introduction to the End Times.** Beginning March 8, 2018

MARCH 29TH 7:00 PM. Video on the science of Crucifixion.

-Rev. Kenneth Beaudoin, Chaplain Team

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Renee Cass – Keep Renee in your thoughts and prayers, as she is on the mend from Rotator Cuff Surgery and a broken, surgically repaired wrist.

Keep all of our members in your thoughts and prayer, the Flu, and other Viruses seem to be moving through our department, and our families.