



**Donald E. Karnes**

**Chesapeake (VA) Police Department Chaplain  
and Chesapeake Police Department Auxiliary Officer**

Chaplain Don Karnes was born in Greenville, SC in 1962. His dad was an evangelist and sold advertisements for WMUU, the station that was owned by Bob Jones University at the time. In October 1967, his dad accepted the call to pastor Grace Baptist Church in Norfolk, VA.

He graduated from Tabernacle Baptist School in Virginia Beach in 1980, and then went to Bob Jones University. He studied Pastoral Studies with a minor in Speech/Radio-Television Broadcasting. Upon receiving his bachelor's degree in 1984, he furthered his education at Bob Jones Seminary and received an M. Div. in 1988. He spent the next two years working in the warehouse for Bob Jones University Press before marrying Cameron Grubbs and moving back to Norfolk, VA. Cameron taught at Grace Baptist School until the school closed in 2003 and taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Tabernacle Baptist Academy in Virginia Beach from 2005-2020. Then in 2020, she was asked to become the high school math teacher. They have three children (Caitlyn 1992, Christen 1994, Paul 2000).

Upon returning to Norfolk, VA, he worked as Chief Operator at Christian Radio Station WPMH and served as youth pastor at Grace Baptist Church. In 1992, the opportunity to teach at Grace Baptist School opened, and he accepted the position. Shortly after accepting that position, his dad had a stroke, and while his dad was able to continue to minister, he had greatly reduced physical ability. This increased the load, and he took on the duties of principal and assistant pastor. In 2003, his dad fully retired due to his physical limitations and the church asked Don to stay on as pastor.

From the earliest years Don remembers having an interest in policing. During his early years he had frequent contact with Dr. Harold Richards who ran a Christian school he attended for several years in the Norfolk area, and then for many years Dr. Richards worked with the Bible Broadcasting Network. Dr. Richards was a chaplain with the Chesapeake Police Department and when BBN moved to the Charlotte, NC, area, Dr. Richards did chaplain work with the Mecklenburg Police Department in that area. Don also interned at Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, SC, in the early 80s and sat under the influence of Dr. John Vaughn, who became a police chaplain with the Greenville Police Department. After Don moved back to Virginia, he re-acquainted himself with Pastor Gary McClenney who had been a missionary that was supported by Grace Baptist Church in the 70s. In addition to pastoring a local church he was

also a police officer with the Chesapeake Police Department. With the early influence and information about police ministry and Pastor McClenney's encouragement, Don became a police chaplain with the Chesapeake Police Department in 1994.

After seven years of just doing chaplain work (and getting tired of chaplain ride-alongs), Don was accepted in 2000 to the Chesapeake Auxiliary Police Academy. Don has also been a sworn officer in the Chesapeake Auxiliary Police Unit since completion of the academy in 2001. This has been an enlightening outreach in addition to his pastoral work, and in 2006 he sought the endorsement of Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International.

Involvement in police ministry is truly a unique opportunity and gives an opportunity to a knowledge in ministry that few share.