

Christian Perspectives on Life in the Military

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Embolden



And the Verdict Is?

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

The crowd grows restless—some cheering, even more jeering—as you stand in a courtroom to hear the decision rendered by a jury of your peers. The evidence from witnesses and their recollections of events has been presented to determine your guilt or innocence. Sternly peering down at you, the judge unfolds the jury's verdict in his hands. He clears his throat. And on the charge of your being a follower of Jesus Christ, he declares you...

As one of my Bible study leaders often asked, "If brought up on charges of being a Christian, is there enough evidence to convict you?" Would a "jury" of loved ones, co-workers, church family—or fellow Monday morning commuters—find you "guilty" of such a charge? Be split in their decision? Or find you in contempt of court for duplicity—being two-faced?

His question pricks me every time I leave a rousing church service or a Bible study—and then get behind the wheel of my car, face difficult situations at work or home, or am alone with temptation. But it increasingly haunts me on another level: Christian persecution. Throughout the ages, and even now, men and women have risked everything to share the gospel message, smuggle Bibles, and worship with others—even while staring down the barrel of a gun!

As men and women in uniform, you are called to serve our great nation. Your service, especially during wartime, is challenging, exhausting, and difficult. Yet also rewarding and exhilarating—an honor and privilege. Christians in the military can uniquely serve Christ by integrating their faith with their profession.

The growing threat to our freedom to proclaim the gospel is absolutely real! Faith in Jesus Christ may bring dire consequences—perhaps costing your life. Yet it is more critical than ever to stand tall in your faith. Christ has called us to run this race, and as we run it, to be **BOLD**:

B—Battle Buddy—Running this race alone is impossible. As Proverbs 27:17 exhorts, "Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." We must surround ourselves with Christians who will challenge, encourage, and dust us off when we fall.

O—Open—We must make ourselves available to engage with others, allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us to be quality witnesses.

L—Listen, Learn, Lead—Listen for the Lord's still, quiet voice. Listen to those around you. Learn Scripture so you can be competent in your witness when you learn of others' needs. Lead with compassion, exemplifying Jesus' servant leadership.

D—Discern—Through prayer, Scripture, and feedback from your Battle Buddy and mentors, understand how best to witness while looking for opportunities.

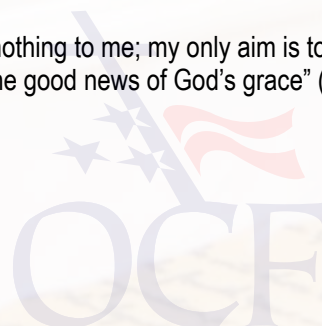
Be BOLD in your faith. Know who you are. More importantly, know *Whose* you are—Jesus Christ's own—redeemed by His blood! Do others know that by your actions, life, and witness? Let OCF come alongside you to help you finish your race strong!

This is my prayer for you in your race, "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Acts 20:24).

My question to you, is there enough evidence?

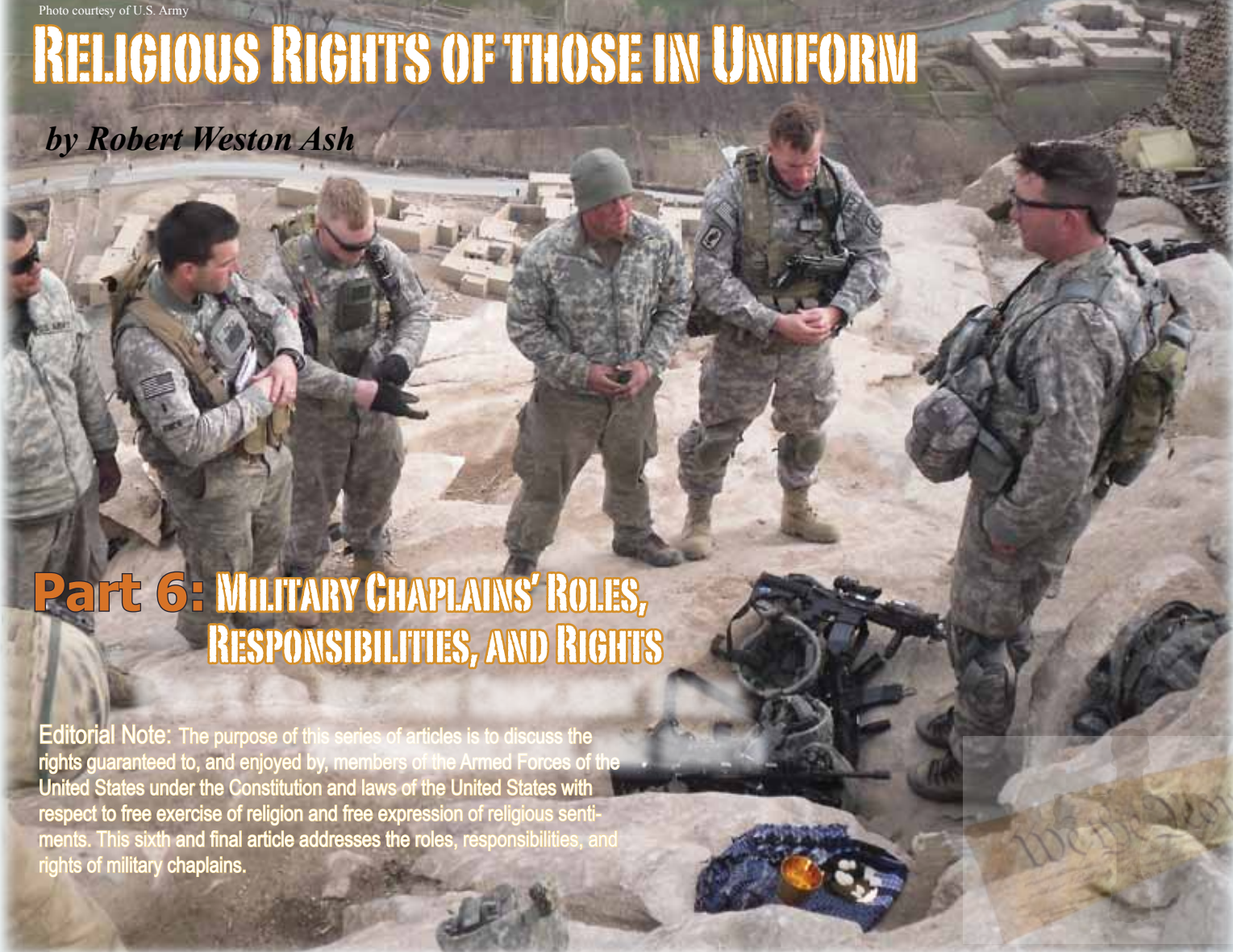
Following Him so that others may lead,

David B. Warner
Brigadier General, USAF, Retired
Executive Director



RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF THOSE IN UNIFORM

by Robert Weston Ash



Part 6: MILITARY CHAPLAINS' ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS

Editorial Note: The purpose of this series of articles is to discuss the rights guaranteed to, and enjoyed by, members of the Armed Forces of the United States under the Constitution and laws of the United States with respect to free exercise of religion and free expression of religious sentiments. This sixth and final article addresses the roles, responsibilities, and rights of military chaplains.

Military chaplains are unique members of the United States Armed Forces. By law, they are commissioned officers without command.¹ As such, the chaplain has no command authority.² Each chaplain is a member of the clergy of a specific faith group and serves in uniform to represent and propagate the teachings of that faith.³ Because Christianity, as represented in its myriad forms, is the most widely practiced religion in the United States,⁴ it is also the religion with the most adherents within the U.S. military. Hence, in order to meet the spiritual needs of the military, the majority of chaplains represent some variant of the Christian faith.

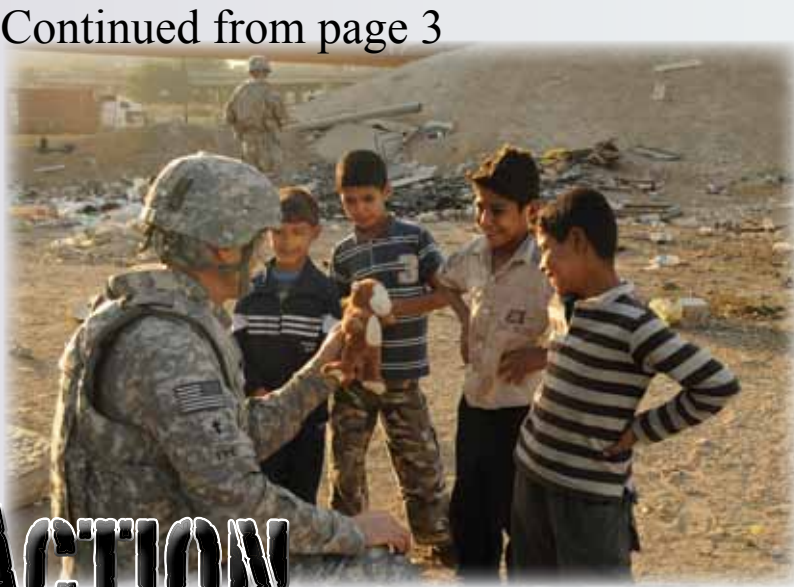
Military chaplains wear multiple hats. They serve, first and foremost, to meet the free exercise needs of the men and women in uniform.⁵ This has been true from the earliest days of our history and pre-dates the founding of the Republic. Consequently, *military chaplains are selected precisely because they represent specific faith groups and specific theological beliefs.* Each chaplain is commissioned to meet the free exercise needs of adherents of his specific faith. As clergymen, military chaplains are not “fungible” assets. Jewish chaplains are not capable of ministering the rites of the Catholic faith to Catholic service members; Methodist chaplains are not capable of ministering the rites of the Islamic faith to Muslim service members;

Buddhist chaplains are not capable of ministering the rites of the Baptist faith to Baptist service members; and so on. Nor may they be compelled to do so.⁶

In their free exercise role, chaplains also wear a second hat. In addition to assisting adherents of their own faith, chaplains support service members of other faiths, or no faith, in obtaining the assistance that they seek. Thus, chaplains must be familiar with the beliefs and needs of other faith groups and must do whatever they can to assist the service member in contacting a chaplain or civilian clergyman of that service member’s faith when faith-specific needs require it.⁷

Chaplains wear a third hat as well. They fulfill a non-faith-specific role. In addition to their religious responsibilities, chaplains are special staff officers who assist their respective commanders in developing and carrying out the commanders’ moral/religious programs.⁸ Chaplains are also trained as counselors and are a non-threatening resource to whom service members can turn when they need advice, are in trouble, have emergencies, and so forth.⁹

To avoid being unconstitutionally entangled in religious matters, DoD relies on civilian ecclesiastical endorsing agencies to ensure that chaplains seeking to serve in uniform meet the religious standards required by their respective faith groups.¹⁰ Were a chaplain to



CHAPLAINS IN ACTION



MILITARY CHAPLAINS' ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS

lose his denominational endorsement, he would be separated from the military.¹¹ Hence, *denominational affiliation is the irreducible essence of membership in the military chaplaincy, and as such, military chaplains are intentionally hired, and hence expected, to represent a specific denominational view within the military.* Chaplains are simply members of the clergy of specific faith groups who conduct their ministries in uniform.

Finally, neither being paid by the military nor wearing a uniform while performing chaplain duties converts a chaplain's religious message into government speech, which must be squelched to avoid violating the Establishment Clause.¹²

Chaplains and Public Prayer

Many of the concerns about religious exercise in the military center around prayers proffered by chaplains at events where adherents of different faiths, or persons of no faith, are present.¹³ Such prayers have been permitted since the founding of our nation. Further, the fact that the First Congress established the tradition of clergy-led prayer at presidential

inaugurations—in themselves, change of command¹⁴ ceremonies between outgoing and incoming Commanders in Chief—indicates that contemporaries of the First Amendment did not regard such prayers as violating the Establishment Clause. Moreover, since the First Congress commissioned the first Army chaplain,¹⁵ and subsequent Congresses appointed the first Navy chaplain and directed that worship take place aboard Navy ships,¹⁶ it is inconceivable that those who drafted the First Amendment intended it to prohibit chaplain-led prayers at military ceremonies.

Given our long and unbroken history of permitting prayers to solemnize military events, having chaplains continue such historical practice today merely reflects long-held traditions and constitutes “tolerable acknowledgment[s] of beliefs widely held among the people of this country.”¹⁷ Hearing such prayers is the price one pays for living in a pluralistic society that honors free exercise of religion and free expression of religious sentiments. It is a testimony to the religious tolerance that we have been able to achieve and is something to be recognized and applauded, not rejected and forbidden.

The U.S. Navy, for example, has an unbroken tradition of saying a prayer aboard each Navy ship each day.¹⁸ That tradition is consistent with the sanctions of Congress concerning religious activity on board naval ships that were enacted shortly after the adoption of the First Amendment.¹⁹ That is strong evidence that such prayers were not considered as violating the Establishment Clause. Similarly, the U.S. Naval Academy has a 164-year tradition of having a Navy chaplain recite a short prayer before noon meals at the Naval Academy.²⁰ These activities are long-standing Naval traditions that remind Sailors and Marines of their proud heritage as well as accommodate “beliefs widely held” by the American people.²¹

Chaplains and Faith-Specific Prayers

Some argue that, in order to avoid giving offense, chaplains must offer only “nonsectarian” prayers when praying at events where adherents of other faiths, and persons of no faith, are present. Such arguments are problematic. First, it is not clear how, or when, an otherwise “sectarian” prayer becomes “nonsectarian”—or who is to judge. After all, “all prayers ‘advance’ a particular faith or belief in one way or another” if for no other reason than “[t]he act of praying to a supreme power assumes the existence of that supreme power.”²² Second, taking offense at what is being said has never been a valid reason to proscribe speech. The same is true today. If U.S. officials ever adopted the nonsectarian prayer

standard, they would violate the Establishment Clause by preferring one form of prayer (nonsectarian) over alternative forms of prayer (sectarian). Such a policy would violate the Establishment Clause as well as every chaplain's free exercise and free speech rights.

Likewise, service members are deemed to be "reasonable observers." Consequently, they are deemed to know that chaplains represent different faiths and traditions and that prayers offered at military events are part of military tradition meant to solemnize the event, *not to endorse the faith or religious sentiments of the chaplain delivering the prayer*. Thus, the Establishment Clause is not violated by a chaplain's private choice of words solemnizing a military event.

If the government outlawed prayer altogether at military events, it would demonstrate hostility, not neutrality, towards religion, given the long history of such prayers in the military and the Supreme Court's recognition that solemnizing, non-proselytizing prayers do not violate the Establishment Clause.

Many of the complaints about prayers at military events concern the issue of praying "in Jesus' name."²³ Not every Christian chaplain feels compelled to pray in Jesus' name, but some do. Such differences reflect religious pluralism not only within American society but also within Western Christianity. Ending a prayer in Jesus' name (or a similar phrase)—without more—is not proselytizing. To proselytize is "to make or try to make converts."²⁴ To assert that merely adding the words "in Jesus' name" to a prayer said in the presence of non-adherents of that faith constitutes proselytizing is absurd. Orthodox Christian theology teaches that Jesus *is* God²⁵—hence, praying in Jesus' name is another form of praying in God's name. Saying a prayer that ends in Jesus' name identifies the religious faith of the person praying, just as beginning a prayer with the words "In the name of Allah the compassionate, the merciful" identifies the person praying as a Muslim, or invoking the "God of Abraham" before reciting the Shema identifies the person praying as Jewish. None of these prayers—without more—can be construed as proselytizing. Yet, were any chaplain to pray in a manner meant to convince the hearer to adopt the chaplain's faith, such a prayer would constitute proselytizing, whether Jesus, the God of Abraham, or Allah were specifically mentioned or not. Hence, fixating on praying in Jesus' name, without more, is groundless.

Because chaplains are intentionally brought into the military as members of different religious faiths, the military knows and expects those chaplains to proclaim and practice the tenets of their respective religious faiths in the military.²⁶ Hence, in such circumstances, to accommodate the chaplain's religious obligations, the chaplain must be allowed leeway to pray as his conscience and faith tradition require.²⁷

When Chaplains May Prefer Their Own Faith

Although chaplains assist commanders in executing command religious programs for *all* service members in their commands, there are times when a chaplain may focus exclusively on his own faith group. The most obvious example is when the chaplain is conducting worship services for adherents of his faith and others interested in attending such services. Yet, chaplains should also be free to advertise religious activities of a specific faith via email (and other communications channels) to the same extent that non-religious activities may be advertised. For example, a Baptist chaplain should be able to advertise a retreat aimed at Baptist service members and their families; a Jewish chaplain should be able to advertise High Holy Day service opportunities to Jewish service members; a Muslim chaplain should be able to advertise events surrounding the observance of Ramadan, and so forth. In each instance, the advertisement need not be

inclusive of other faiths, or sensitive to those of no faith, and the chaplain should be able to freely share religious sentiments about the events advertised. Such advertising does not run afoul of the Establishment Clause.²⁸

Chaplains may also favor their faith when teaching the truths of their faith to interested service members or their family members. Chaplains are selected to meet the religious needs of adherents of their faith. Hence, the chaplain need not be inclusive of non-adherents during such times, without violating the Constitution.

What is Prohibited to Chaplains

Prayers offered by chaplains at military events are permissible as "a tolerable acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the people of this country,"²⁹ even when they are faith-specific. No chaplain, however, may proselytize while praying at such events or disparage other faiths.³⁰

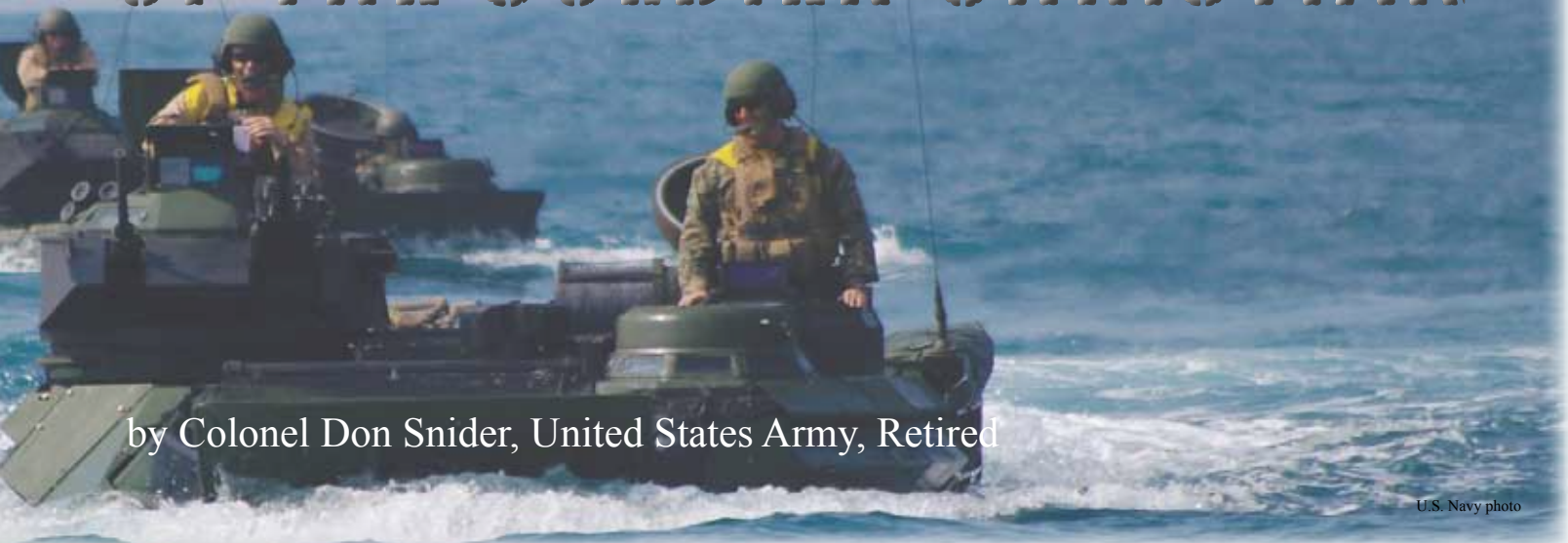
Teaching the strictures and beliefs of one's faith, even when they contradict beliefs of another faith, does not constitute disparaging the other faith, *provided that* such teaching occurs where people freely gather on their own accord to receive such teaching. For example, a Christian chaplain's affirmative teaching to Christians and/or other interested persons that Jesus is the only way to heaven, a core Christian teaching, does not disparage Islam, despite Islamic teachings about Jesus to the contrary, just as a Muslim chaplain's affirmative teaching to Muslims and/or other interested persons concerning Mohammed's prophetic office, a key Islamic teaching not shared by Christians, does not disparage Christianity. Such faith-specific *teaching* is inappropriate, however, where service members and their families are otherwise required to be present (i.e., where they are a captive audience).

Religiously, we are a heterogeneous nation, and the military chaplaincy reflects that heterogeneity. Rather than restrict how an individual chaplain expresses his faith, the chaplain should be free to act consistently with his conscience and faith tradition.

(endnotes)

- 1 See 10 U.S.C. § 3581 (2006).
- 2 Field Manual 1-05: Religious Support, *supra* note 54, § 3-106.
- 3 See, e.g., Dep't of the Navy, *United States Navy Regulations*, 1990, ch. 8, § 1, art. 0817(2) (1990) ("Chaplains shall be permitted to conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church of which they are members." (emphasis added)). Legislative chaplains are different. Legislative chaplains exist to seek Divine blessings on, and to solemnize the proceedings of, legislators in enacting the statutes that govern us all, not to ensure free exercise of religion by legislators. See Andy G. Olree, "James Madison and Legislative Chaplains," 102 *Nw. U. L. Rev.* 145, 151 (2008).
- 4 See U.S. Census Bureau, *Religious Composition of U.S. Population: 2007* (tbl.74) (2008), available at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09/0074.pdf> (reporting the combined percentage of Protestants and Catholics in the U.S. at 75.2% as of 2007).
- 5 *Katsoff v. Marsh*, 755 F.2d 223, 234 (2d Cir. 1985).
- 6 See, e.g., *Wheeler v. Maunula*, 430 U.S. 705, 714 (1977) (recognizing that freedom of expression includes the right to refrain from such expression); AFI 52-101 2.1 (2005) ("Chaplains do not perform duties that are incompatible with their faith group tenets. . . .").
- 7 E.g., Sec'y of the Navy, *Secretary of the Navy Instruction 1730.7D: Religious Ministry Within the Department of the Navy* para. 5(c)(3) (2008) ("Chaplains care for all service members, including those who claim no religious faith, [and] facilitating the religious requirements of personnel of all faiths. . . .").
- 8 Dep't of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive 1304.19: Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments* para. 4.1 (2004).
- 9 Israel Drazin & Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country: The History of a Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy* 35, 41 (1995).
- 10 *Id.* at 32. DoD can, and does, set neutral criteria that all chaplains—irrespective of faith group—must meet, such as education, health, age, and experience requirements. Dep't of Defense, *Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28: Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments* paras. 6.1 to 4 (2004).
- 11 *Drazin & Currey*, *supra* note ix, at 32; *Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28: Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, *supra* note x, at para. 6.5.
- 12 See *Rigdon v. Perry*, 962 F. Supp. 150, 159 (D.D.C. 1997) (attributing a chaplain's words to his faith group, not the military).
- 13 E.g., *Chalker v. Gates*, Case No. 08-2467-KHV-JPO (D. Kan. filed Sept. 25, 2008) (where plaintiff complains, *inter alia*, about hearing "sectarian Christian prayers" being delivered at mandatory events).
- 14 Technically, George Washington's inauguration as President under our current Constitution, being the first, was an assumption of command ceremony, not a change of command ceremony, but the principle remains the same.
- 15 Military Establishment Act of 1791, ch. XXVIII, § 5, 1 Stat. 222.
- 16 See Act of March 2, 1799, ch. XXIV, 1 Stat. 709 (requiring commanders of ships with chaplains on board "to take care [that] divine service be performed twice a day, and the sermon preached on Sundays"); Act of March 23, 1800, ch. XXXIII, 2 Stat. 45 (directing commanders of ships to require the ship's crew "to attend at every performance of the worship of Almighty God").
- 17 *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783, 792 (1983).
- 18 See, e.g., "Chaplain John Maurice Delivers Meaningful Shipboard Prayer on the Eve of the War in Iraq," *Mil. Christian* (Christian Military Fellowship, Orville, Cal.), Summer 2003, http://members.iquest.net/~c_m_f/cmfcw56.htm (last visited May 6, 2009); Navy Recruiting Command, *Delayed Entry Program, Daily Routine*, <http://www.crc.navy.mil/DEP/daily.htm> (last visited May 6, 2009) (including the traditional evening prayer in Navy Recruits' daily schedules).
- 19 *Supra* note 16 and accompanying text.
- 20 Jacqueline L. Salmon, "ACLU Might File Suit to End Lunch Prayer," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 2008, at B04; see also Charles J. Gibowicz, *Miss Night Traditions* 115 (2007).
- 21 *Marsh*, 463 U.S. at 792.
- 22 *Snyder v. Murray City Corp.*, 159 F.3d 1227, 1234 n.10 (10th Cir. 1998).
- 23 E.g., "Efforts Afoot to Protect Military Prayers," *WorldNetDaily*, Nov. 17, 2005, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=47432 (describing the backlash following the U.S. Air Force's decision to ban prayers in Jesus's name "in the wake of complaints from non-Christians at the Air Force Academy who believed Christians, both cadets and staff, were being too heavy-handed about their faith on campus").
- 24 *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* 802 (Deluxe ed. 1991).
- 25 See John 1:1, 14 ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."); 10:30 ("I and the Father are one").
- 26 E.g., *Air Force Policy Directive 52-1: Chaplain Service*, at para. 3.4.
- 27 See *Hobbie v. Unemployment Appeals Comm'n of Florida*, 480 U.S. 136, 144-45 (1987) (noting that "the government may (and sometimes must) accommodate religious practices and that it may do so without violating the Establishment Clause"); *Marsh*, 463 U.S. at 791-92 (approving legislative prayers from the "Judeo-Christian tradition").
- 28 See *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors*, 515 U.S. 819, 839 (1995) (recognizing that Government neutrality is respected, not offended, when evenhanded policies are applied to diverse viewpoints, including religious viewpoints).
- 29 *Marsh*, 463 U.S. at 792.
- 30 *Id.* at 794-95. To proselytize is defined as "to make or try to make converts." *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* 802 (Deluxe ed. 1991). To disparage is defined as "to belittle, deprecate." *Id.* at 272.

THE AUTHENTIC WITNESS OF THE SOLDIER CHRISTIAN



by Colonel Don Snider, United States Army, Retired

U.S. Navy photo

As Warren Bennis has so well laid out in his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, a leader can never surrender to the context in which we find ourselves. Successful leaders, he demonstrates, become so because they master the context within which they lead, overcoming the habits, practices, and rules that so often lead to ineffectual leadership.¹ So in what context will you next lead?

As a military professional, you have dual callings to God and to country, each with duties and ethics that you have fully accepted. It is vital that you not compartmentalize your life into your varied roles (supposing that one actually could do so psychologically which is, of course, quite debatable). Your faith is to be, and will be, known by all in whatever context you are leading.

Secondly, you are free to witness appropriately to your faith, even as you fulfill your military responsibilities. The Constitution and, subsequently, Congresses, Executives, and Courts have consistently provided for such expression and it is one of your tasks to be well informed as to what “appropriate” means in the context I just used it.²

And thirdly, your core leadership challenge is to build trust. The strength of the leader’s character, the extent of your competence, and the establishment of cooperative and interdependent relationships with followers combine to develop trust. And that earned trust on the part of the follower is what enables leaders to lead with a higher impact.³

So, given the evolving military culture within which you live and serve, ***I recommend that you choose to be a positive witness first and foremost by your professional excellence, by both your military competence and your moral character.***

Remember what Paul taught the Corinthians—witness is about “persuasion.” I believe a military leader who is most “persuasive” in this biblical sense will be one who “speaks” in the cultural language that the military most expects and best understands. We all know that in military society, subordinates are watching military leaders carefully to see what they will do, how they will

decide and act, more so than if they are listening to them to hear what they say. The best way to witness is thus by your daily professional practice—by exhibiting professional excellence in and through the military competence and moral character manifested in your leadership judgments and actions.

Note also that such forms of persuasion are completely compatible, indeed expected, within the ethics of the military profession, which is essentially a self-policing meritocracy. Your merits as a professional—of both competence and character—need to be constantly and humbly on display as your military and Christian witness.

Some will object that such a choice slights the importance of other forms of witness, such as verbal expression. I disagree, and suggest that within many venues your consistent professional excellence will multiply personal relationships. It also provides other opportunities for a more personal witness, as those around you seek to know the source of your faith-based approach to life and work.

I suggest that for the soldier Christian there are at least four practices that facilitate the moral development of Christian leaders: (1) Die daily to self; (2) Be steeped in God’s Truth; (3) Remain empowered by the Holy Spirit; and, (4) Be content with, indeed seek, a life of simplicity. These practices are best understood as disciplines of the mind and the body which we are ***intentionally and almost ruthlessly to habituate*** as leaders within the military profession. A bit of explanation of each of these is warranted, which I shall do for purposes of brevity without references or proof texting.⁴

Die daily to self. Once united with God through faith in Christ, the essence of living in the Kingdom is to live as Jesus Himself would live if He were in your assignment. The heart of your character should be the same *agape* love and boundless humility that enabled Jesus to live within God’s effective will, even to His death. But our human hearts are proud and deceitful, per-

Some definitions are in order: **Soldier** is used generically to describe any Christian serving in the U.S. military regardless of service or rank. **Authentic** (adj.) – worthy of trust, reliance or belief; having an undisputed origin; genuine (*American Heritage Dictionary* [AHD], Houghton Mifflin, 1976); **Witness** (n.), Greek, *MARTUS*, denotes one who can aver what he has seen or heard or knows (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*, Revell, 1981). To aver – to declare in a positive or dogmatic manner; to affirm. (AHD).

haps more so in the warrior; therefore, you will have to abnegate self every single day, sometimes many times a day. Without this practice, the other disciplines will simply not be effective.

A good way to think of this practice is to check every decision you make against what personal equities you have in the decision. Are you benefiting in any way? Only the crass careerist could contemplate such self-oriented practices. You, instead, serve for the Audience of One, and He is able. You are the servant of all others, even those who might oppose you. And, given the loneliness of command and the difficulty of such an introspective daily practice, I suggest you check your motives as often as possible in an accountable fellowship with other soldier Christians.

Be steeped in God's Truth. For the Christian, the perfect will of God is found in His revelations, both natural and written. In them He informs us of the content and way of moral excellence and hence the settings we are to adopt for our own moral compass. You will face many temptations to calibrate your compass with all manner of good advice and insights, both from your profession and from the society you serve. But your check in every instance must be its compatibility with God's revelation. For the follower of Christ, there can be no other standard by which to develop moral excellence.

I suggest you not attempt to be the moral exemplar within your leadership role unless your own character is constantly calibrated by deep study of God's revelations, and your life is lived within the auspices and support of His moral community, His church. Only then will your personal character, manifested daily in your decisions and actions, be authentic to both of your callings.

Remain empowered by the Holy Spirit. The process of sanctification, the growing of spiritual maturity into Christ-likeness, continues from the moment we are united with God until we die—but *only if* we remain empowered by the Spirit that Christ gave us as He departed this earth. Without His power we may have our compass pointed on moral north, but we will surely be lacking in moral agency, the courage to act on what we know to be right.

The military professions have no shortage of leaders who can reason to right moral decisions and have the best of intentions with that knowledge. But you and I have seen far too many cases where it all stopped there. For the soldier Christian true strength of will to act, and then willingly to be accountable for such acts, comes from the indwelling Spirit via the practices that foster His activity in our daily lives (prayer, study, fasting, listening, tithing, worship, the sacraments, service). For this to happen, by intentional practice you must live the habits of mind and body that allow the Spirit, unimpeded, to do His will in and through you.

Seek to live a life of simplicity. “Keeping up with the Joneses” within America's hyper-materialism should not be the motivation or the witness of the soldier Christian. It simply does not fit the role of the servant that is mandated within the ethic of

each of your callings. Rather than extrinsic displays, the motivation of the military professional is intrinsic to the calling—the honor and nobility of service to fellow citizens and to the republic; the satisfaction of missions rightly accomplished and of soldiers well led.

Now, with transferrable college benefits, lifetime health care, and a reasonable retirement, you are solidly in America's upper middle class and will remain there. Anything more will appear unbecoming of your callings. Given that, I suggest your family's lifestyle of contented simplicity will all the more lend a megaphone to your witness as a soldier Christian as it causes many to wonder why you are so set apart!

Conclusion

The witness of the soldier Christian is an imperative, but to be effective it must be done in a manner that is persuasive. And now this is to be done in an environment of increasing hostility to religious expression. So I am suggesting that the best way to understand your witness is to see it primarily as your daily professional practice wherein your professional excellence “speaks” of your Christian faith. Soldier Christians who are seen and known to be professionally excellent as manifested in their military competence and moral character are a witness to their faith in the language that is most expected, common, and understandable within the military profession.

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(Endnotes)

1. Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Basic Books, 2003), see particularly chapter 1.
2. See, Religious Freedom for Soldiers and Military Chaplains (National Association of Evangelicals Declaration, February 2006), available at: http://www.nae.net/images/content/NAE_Statement_on_Military_Religious_Freedom.pdf
3. See, Patrick J. Sweeney and Sean T. Hannah, “High-Impact Military Leadership: The Positive Effects of Authentic Moral Leadership on Followers,” chapter 5 in Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (eds.), *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008): 91-116.
4. In addition to the Scriptures, there are dozens of texts from which over the years these ideas have been gleaned and lived. I believe several are so insightful and helpful that they should be in the library of every lay soldier Christian. The most prominent of these texts are: John R. W. Stott, *Life in Christ, The Cross of Christ, The Contemporary Christian*; J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*; A. J. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*; Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*; Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline*; and, James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*.



An Interview about deployment with Lieutenant Colonel Mike and Lieutenant Colonel Martha VanDriel, United States Army

DUTY CALLS



D Describe your recent deployment experience. Mike deployed to Iraq in 2008-2009, while Martha was in Iraq for six months in 2010. We have two children, Matthew and Micah. Micah has autism, which created additional challenges for the spouse that stayed behind.

What have you experienced that is unique to your situation?

Mike: Our situation might be unique in that we've both played the role of the deployed spouse and the at-home spouse.

Martha: Most of us think of a military husband as deployed with the non-military wife staying at home with the children. But in situations like ours, the stay-at-home spouse also has to handle the professional time demands of being a military officer. As you can imagine, the competing demands are very stressful. We were blessed to have work chains of command who were very understanding when we were the stay-at-home spouse.

As the spouse who stayed home while the other deployed, what were some of the struggles you experienced?

Mike: As a husband, it was hard for me to see Martha leave for a combat zone, and there was no way that I could protect her. I didn't feel better until she was returning and called me from the continental U.S. For support, I relied on my men's Bible study at church and our local OCF Bible study.

Martha: When I was getting ready to deploy, it seemed like a lot more people approached Mike and offered him help, than when Mike was deploying and I was at home! People assume that the husband will have a harder time taking care of the children while the wife is gone than the other way around. Another challenge was Micah's autism. When Mike was deployed my command wanted to send me on TDY. We couldn't just ask extended family to take care of our boys because Micah's non-verbal and autistic behaviors required care from someone who was familiar with him. Providentially, we have a live-in nanny who has been with us for years, and she could care for our boys when both of us had to be gone. We still needed a family member to come and help as well.

Martha, as a woman deploying, did you experience any specific stress in leaving your husband at home?

Martha: We were very concerned that Micah's autism might get worse while I was gone because he is very attached to me. We were blessed to have a local OCF Bible study group as well as several faithful Christian friends praying with us. Micah continued to make progress while I was gone, which was a tremendous praise.

What affect did your deployment have on your children?

Mike: It really helped our boys—especially Micah—to be able to see the absent parent via webcam once a week. It also made family re-integration much easier.

Martha: Mike experienced fewer disciplinary problems with our boys than I did because he's the "bad cop" in the family. I asked our older son, Matthew, why he missed me when I was gone, and he said, "Dad is tougher than you are, but you're a lot more cuddly and soothing than Dad is!"

Mike and Martha VanDriel are both U.S. Army lieutenant colonels. They currently live in Hawaii, but hope to move to the D.C. area this summer.

BRINGING COURAGE TO THE COURAGEOUS



by Barb Beyer, based upon an interview with
Chaplain (Captain) Don Williamson, USA

Don Williamson has served as an Army infantryman, military police officer, and a chaplain. He currently serves as the battalion chaplain for the 759th MP Battalion at Fort Carson, Colorado. Last year he authored the book Bringing Courage to the Courageous.

After serving nine years in the Army as an MP, Don Williamson found himself sitting in a chaplain's office in Iraq. "I think the Lord is calling me to be a chaplain!" As he and the chaplain talked further, Don realized that the calling to be a chaplain—relationally reaching out to one person at a time—appealed to him.

Don believes that some people go into the chaplaincy in order to bring the gospel message to soldiers. However, the chaplaincy exists to meet the free exercise needs of men and women in uniform. Once those counterparts are reconciled, a chaplain can serve the Lord in powerful ways.

Chaplains lead the way in earning the right to be heard. It's a huge job just reaching out to those within that chaplain's endorsing denomination. For instance, there is one priest for approximately every 10,000 soldiers claiming Catholicism. The top religious preference claim on dog tags today? NRP—No Religious Preference. We need to pray for our already stretched chaplains as they seek to effectively minister to everyone.

Once while Chaplain Williamson was distributing "Joshua 1:9 shield of faith" medals, one soldier refused, saying that he was an atheist. Don smiled and continued distributing the medals to those who wanted them. By the end of that year of serving together, Don had developed a relationship with that particular soldier and even helped him with some marital counseling. By not pushing, Don had earned the right to be heard. Instead of pushing their faith, chaplains can model the "me and my house" attitude, letting soldiers know that they are

always willing to talk about spiritual things.

Being a chaplain on deployment is an extremely lonely job. While chaplains provide religious support, relationship, and encouragement, who ministers to them? Chaplains struggle and need accountability, too. But Don sees the biggest deployment difficulty as the chaplains' need to pace themselves for the marathon. It isn't over when they come home, either. While soldiers are reintegrating into their families they still need counseling through what can be a very rough adjustment.

Sometimes deployed chaplains can go beyond honoring the religious practices of their soldiers by reaching out to the host nation. In Afghanistan, when their regular steak-grilling night fell two days before the end of Ramadan, Don realized that to honor their host nation—and all the local nationals that served on the base—it would be best to either grill after sundown or wait two more days. The commander agreed. By waiting two more days the locals gratefully received the steak dinner alongside the U.S. soldiers.

Some say that the chaplaincy is no longer necessary—that the military could contract with pastors who are serving in churches near posts. But they're already busy serving their churches. Pastors aren't going to go to war alongside soldiers, or wear the uniform, or jump out of a plane. Chaplains are the quintessential missionaries—becoming like them in order to save some. The Apostle Paul would be proud of these brave men and women serving the Lord in uniform!

Front Cover: A U.S. Army soldier provides security during a quality assurance and quality control visit to a Community Center in Zabul province, Afghanistan. DoD photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson, U.S. Air Force



TO GOD BE THE GLORY

by Commander Ray Johnson, United States Navy, Retired

It is an exciting spring for OCF's east coast conference center, [White Sulphur Springs](#). The new Heritage House should be completed soon and the dedication is scheduled for 30 April. The Spring Canyon phase of the campaign has begun. One can't help but sing "to God be the glory, great things He has done."

As General Fister reflected on his involvement in the campaign: “I used to think that the capital campaign was about the Lord providing for our conference center facilities, which He has done. But in the end, the campaign was about the Lord making me more into His likeness and walking closer to Him.”



When Lt Gen Bruce Fister, USAF (Ret.), became OCF’s executive director, he recognized the need to get a better handle on the conference center ministry and its future in OCF. In 2000 he assembled a conference center task force to review a significant report of research on this ministry conducted the previous year by Dan Bolin Resources. The task force reported that the conference centers were a catalyst bringing the larger OCF ministry into focus for many members and a key outreach for the academy and ROTC ministries. The task force recommended that OCF provide additional funding to Spring Canyon and White Sulphur Springs to significantly expand and enhance the ministry facilities.

In 2003 the OCF Council approved a preliminary architectural design for a new WSS facility, effectively doubling the capacity. It also established a prayer initiative and executive committees for capital needs. In 2004 a forty-day prayer vigil sought God’s guidance—and input from members—on the conference center expansion program. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and OCF engaged the Timothy Group to help launch and guide us through a multi-year capital campaign. In 2005 the OCF Council approved a phased capital campaign with the newly named Heritage House as the first project. General Fister wrote that he “never had to raise millions of dollars from donors who were generally not well versed in the financial needs of OCF.” This gradually changed as we started a development department under the leadership of Dave Rowland.

From the beginning, we realized the criticality

of wrapping the efforts in prayer. As Lt Gen Fister wrote, “I am absolutely convinced that prayer was the most important ingredient of this whole effort and that the Lord blessed our work because we relied upon Him and not on our own efforts.” In fact some of the “best ideas” were changed by a declining economy. Yet “through it all, we learned to trust in Jesus, we learned to trust in God.”

As we dedicate the Heritage House to the ongoing ministry of OCF, we find that the entire \$7.8M cost of the project has been pledged and the vast majority of the money is in hand. The generosity of members and friends of OCF is overwhelming. We certainly learned to trust God’s timetable and to follow His leading. As General Fister reflected on his involvement in the campaign: “I used to think that the capital campaign was about the Lord providing for our conference center facilities, which He has done. But in the end, the campaign was about the Lord making me more into His likeness and walking closer to Him.” Lt Gen Fister’s reflections and those of the campaign committee are in complete agreement.

OCF now moves on to the Spring Canyon phase of the campaign, which is off to a great start with \$1.14M pledged of the \$3.5M goal. We pause to express our praise and thanksgiving for “the great things He has taught us, great things He has done.” May we continue “growing together... building the future” as the Lord remains faithful to continue to “declare His power to the next generation.”



MAJ Cary and LTC Stacy Bathrick , USA, (front left) host the Fort Knox OCF group, meeting on this night to say goodby to CPT Jon and Sally Chavous, USA, (back left), who were departing to Fort Benning, GA.



He's Home

Kristin Spurlock photo

Leaping into Daddy's arms, Army Major Brian Spurlock's sons joyously welcome him home from deployment.



Kentucky, Fort Knox

LTC Dan Dantzer, USA (Ret.), photo



Air Force Academy

USAF cadets Parker Huges (middle) and Kara Hovseth (back left) spent their lunch break with OCF home office members visiting the academy on a field trip.

Resurrection Retreat

22-24 April, White Sulphur Springs

Join us this Easter for a full weekend for all ages—deep fellowship, teaching, worship—and the Easter morning sunrise service.

James I. Wilson is the speaker
Check WSS's website for details:
www.whitesulphursprings.org.

Moving? New rank?

Update your membership at the OCF website: www.ocfusa.org. Check under **News & Events** for the **Update Your Information** tab to submit changes.

White Sulphur Springs, PA

Having Fun



Check your calendar and join others at White Sulphur Springs for a week of fun with family, friends, teens and younger children.

Check out the **Family camps** and **Youth Programs** on the web. www.whitesulphursprings.org

Register now!

Newly elected Council Class of 2013

MG James A. Coggin, USA (Ret.)

LT Andrew P. Halvorson, USCG

Col Kim D. Hawthorne, USAF

Lt Col Scott Nowlin, USAF

MAJ Jonathan A. Shine, USA

CAPT James L. Vandiver, USN

LT Christopher L. Wallace, USN



Births

Stuart Graham Anderson, born 18 December 2010, son of **LTJG John and Anna Anderson, USCG**, Warrenton, OR.

Kyle Martin Hardison, born 12 January 2011, son of **ENS William and Amy Hardison, USN**, Wheaton, IL.

Aliza Ann Loucks, born 6 August 2010, daughter of **Capt Nate and Capt Val Loucks, USAF**, Rapid City, SD.

Gabriella Kay Morgan, born 4 December 2010, daughter of **MAJ Andrew and Stacey Morgan, USA**, Fort Belvoir, VA.

Andrew Noah Pruitt, born 3 February 2011, son of **Lt Col Will and Elizabeth Pruitt, USAF**, Patrick AFB, FL.

Weddings

LTC Wayne Kirkbride, USA (Ret.), married Melanie Ann Golden, 30 December 2010. Their home is Monument, CO.

Taps

Carolyn L. Blight, MD, 12 March 2010, wife of **COL Edward M. Blight Jr., USA (Ret.)**, Charlotte, NC.

CW04 Ernest E. Miller, USAF (Ret.), 31 October 2010, Longmont, CO.

Maj William Palmer, USMC (Ret.), 7 December 2010, husband of **Carol Palmer**, Sykesville, MD.

CAPT John P. Prisley, USN (Ret.), 31 December 2010, husband of **Judy Prisley**, Sterling, VA.

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Rocky Mountain High!

Since 1983, Spring Canyon Conference Center's outdoor adventure program—Rocky Mountain High (RMH)—has uniquely influenced military officers to Christ-based leadership in their homes and careers.

Participants engage in some of summer's most challenging sports—rock climbing, rappelling, whitewater rafting, and a three-day backpacking trip bagging a 14er. Combine those adrenaline rushes with team building exercises and the timelessness of lessons-learned experience from senior officers who lead the RMH sessions. And suddenly things like professional excellence, servant leadership, spiritual warfare, prayer, and suffering take on fresh application in the face of out-of-the-box challenges.

Open to cadets, midshipmen, company grade officers, and anyone else interested in learning more about becoming a leader as the Lord Jesus Christ modeled, RMH added a married couples only session to the schedule for the first time ever last year. One couple who participated was Capt Scott and Heather Campbell, USAF:

My husband and I wanted to go on a vacation together for our anniversary but we weren't interested in many of the "traditional" ones. We had met as high schoolers at White Sulphur Springs on Allegheny Outback! (AO!). We thought it would be fun to do another adventure together!

Mike McKean (outdoor program leader) put together a couples week for RMH. We were thrilled! We contacted our friends and were ready to go!

While planning for our trip, I started getting anxious about all the physical activities we would encounter. Could I complete the hike up the mountain? Could I do the ropes courses—or rappel?

The Lord reminded me that no matter where I go in life, He is always with me—and has given me an incredible man to share my life with. And the joy of being together in the mountains in God's wonderful creation! It was indescribable.

Life's next adventures won't require ropes or a pack. There will be many mountains to climb with some slips along the way. But my God will walk beside me—and so will the man I love. Can I do all these things? Yes—through Christ who strengthens me!



For more information about RMH or to register for one of Spring Canyon's summer sessions, check out the Spring Canyon website <http://www.springcanyon.org/>

"Great time! We really liked how everything was related back to our relationship with the Lord as well as our marriage."

"We were refreshed and encouraged. We will definitely recommend it to friends."

RMH Schedule 2011

RMH 1: 28 May–4 June	RMH 5: 23–30 July (married couples)
RMH 2: 4–11 June	
RMH 3: 11–18 June	RMH 6: 30 July–6 August
RMH 4: 16–23 July	

The Generosity Fast

by Dave Rowland

OCF Director of Resource Development



Fasting gets mixed (sometimes heated) reviews among Christians. But let's not wade into that argument. God, through Isaiah, has something unique to say on the subject, and His words might surprise you.

The Bible mentions fasting a number of times, often for receiving something. An example might be Esther's request to Mordecai to have all the Jews fast for three days along with her in preparation for her going to see the king, which was against the law.

In fasting it's important to have a right motive. In Isaiah 58:3-5, God tells His people that their fasting does not please Him. He tells them that their self-centered fasting—expecting God to do something for them—is wrong-headed and unacceptable.

What does He really want? In verses 6-7 God says the fast that pleases Him is a fast *to give*, not to get. "Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

I may be wrong, but I read this to mean that fasting is yet another way to give, another way to live generously. Verse 10 is explicit, "and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

We fast for many reasons, but did you ever consider fasting to give? In Matthew 6 Jesus talks about fasting in secret for the Father's reward. But note the passage that immediately follows, Matthew 6:19-20: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Do you see the connection with Isaiah 58? I don't want to put words in Jesus' mouth, but He seems to be saying that if we're going to fast, do it secretly, humbly, and for a loving reason like helping others, thereby laying up treasures in Heaven.

Generous living is not about money. It's about our heart's attitude toward God and toward others. I don't know about you, but I want to live generously. Thank You, Lord, for giving us yet another way.

In Honor of...

The OCF Honor Fund

An honor gift is a meaningful way to honor or remember someone special in your life, while also supporting the ministry of Officers' Christian Fellowship.

IN HONOR OF –

Lt Col Charles T. Brown, USAF (Ret.)

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Mary Isabel Finnell

By CAPT & Mrs. O.W. Camp Jr., USNR (Ret.)

Roy Hammond

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Lt William Paul Herbert, USA

By James Herbert

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By CAPT & Mrs. O.W. Camp Jr., USNR (Ret.)

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By LTC & Mrs. H.G. Vaughan, USA (Ret.)



Celebration!

Youth Program



Family Camp

Come join us for family camp during our summer celebration of the new Heritage House!

www.whitesulphursprings.org



White Sulphur Springs

We look forward to seeing you this summer!