

# The Army Chaplaincy

Professional Bulletin of the Unit Ministry Team

SUMMER-FALL 2009

# **Spiritual Resilience: Renewing the Soldier's Mind**

# Next issue: 'Preaching and Worship Leadership'

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- 1 **From the Chief**  
Chaplain (MG) Douglas L. Carver
- 5 **From the Regimental SGM**  
SGM Tommy L. Marrero
- 6 **Commandant's Notes**  
Chaplain (COL) Samuel J.T. Boone
- 7 **From the USACHCS CSM**  
CSM Marylena McCrimmon
- 8 **Spiritual Resiliency and the Senior  
Chaplain's Role**  
Chaplain (COL) Mike Dugal
- 13 **Why Comprehensive Soldier Fitness? A  
Personal and Organizational Perspective**  
BG Rhonda Cornum
- 18 **The Human, Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions  
of Leadership in Preparation for Combat**  
Dr. John W. Brinsfield and  
Chaplain (LTC) Peter A. Baktis
- 41 **Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership**  
Ms. Ruth Haley Barton
- 55 **TAQWAH and SABR: The Foundation of  
Spiritual Resilience in Islam**  
Chaplain (LTC) Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad
- 61 **Spiritual Resiliency in the Life of a  
Chaplain's Spouse**  
Mrs. Nancy J. Wheatley
- 65 **Spiritual Resilience from the Foxhole**  
SGM Marion Lemon
- 69 **A Jewish Perspective on Spiritual Resilience**  
Chaplain (CPT) Henry Soussan  
(Continued next page)

**Chaplain (MG) Douglas L. Carver**  
Chief of Chaplains

**SGM Tommy L. Marrero**  
Chief of Chaplains and Regimental SGM

**Chaplain (COL) Samuel J.T. Boone**  
USACHCS Commandant

**CSM Marylena McCrimmon**  
USACHCS Command Sergeant Major

**Chaplain (COL) Christopher H. Wisdom**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Steven Hoover**  
Managing Editor

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By order of the Secretary of the Army:

**George W. Casey Jr.**  
*General, United States Army*  
Chief of Staff

Official:

**Joyce E. Morrow**  
*Administrative Assistant to the  
Secretary of the Army*

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**(Contents Page continued)**

- 74     **Combat Trauma, Resiliency and Spirituality****  
          Chaplain (LTC) Dean Bonura
- 82     **Soldier Resiliency and the Question of Evil****  
          Chaplain (LTC) Robert Roetzel
- 86     **A Question of Spiritual Resiliency in Context****  
          Chaplain (MAJ) William Scritchfield
- 89     **Religious Leadership in the Army****  
          Chaplain (MAJ) Paul Jaedicke
- 93     **Theology of Suffering and Evil****  
          Chaplain (CPT) Daniel W. Hardin
- 100    **Spiritual Resilience: Renewing the Soldier’s Mind****  
          Chaplain (CPT) Paul Tolbert
- 103    **100th Anniversary of the Chaplain Assistant****  
          SFC Naomi Rankins
- 108    **Photo montage of Chaplaincy Spiritual Renewal Retreats****  
**at Lake Junaluska (N.C.), 2009**
- 109    **Book Reviews****

# From the Chief

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Chaplain (MG) Douglas L. Carver, Chief of Chaplains

“**H**ow is it with your soul?”

The above question has been asked by religious communities for hundreds of years -- from the Benedictines in the 4th century to Methodism in the 17th century. It is a probing question that cuts beyond facades to investigate the real state of one's own soul. It is an extremely personal question regarding the integrity, health, and resilience of your center of being. As your Chief, I ask you that question today. *How is it with your soul?* The question is rhetorical and the great need is not for me to hear your answer (though that need exists, so I can best lead you), but for you to hear the honest voice of your soul reporting its true condition. *How is it with your soul?*

In a different time and context, Founding Father Thomas Paine wrote, “*these are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.*” We are now in the eighth year of the longest war our nation has ever fought without a draft. Our Army and our Chaplain Corps have served valiantly and steadfastly in all seasons of conflict and not just in the “*summer*” and “*sunshine*.” In an era of enduring conflict that tries the souls of our men and women, you magnificently continue to minister to the stressed souls of our Army. You continue to provide religious support that is unsurpassed in our corps' 234 year history and as Thomas Paine wrote, you deserve the “*love and thanks*” of all those touched by your prevailing pastoral leadership. Please know I esteem each of you dearly and each one of you, and your Families, have my deepest thanks and love for your service.

Over the course of this conflict, our chaplains and chaplain assistants have not “*shrunk from the service of their country.*” The Chaplain Corps continues to rise to each occasion to sustain the souls of Soldiers and Families. You have maintained the spiritual resiliency of our Army and I now ask you in light of the question above to measure your own resilience. Resilience is “*the ability to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity.*” How is your “*bounce?*” To use an athletic illustration, it's key to remember that what gives a basketball the “*bounce*” to return when dribbled is nothing integral to it, but the air pumped into it from outside itself. We do not maintain spiritual resilience in and of ourselves, but through the “*inspiration*” of the divine resources of our faith. What gives us “*spiritual bounce*” is the substance of faith, not unsustainable emotion or self-sufficiency. To continue to “*bounce back*” and provide religious support to the Army that's depending upon us, we need to take moments to breathe deeply the truth of our spiritual beliefs and drink deeply from the wells of faith. There are at least two dynamics that prevent us from absorbing that required spiritual inspiration. The first of those is spiritual illness in our souls. In *The Rest of God*, Mark Buchanan writes that we usually ensure or defy physical sickness but “*...soul sickness we often resign ourselves to.*” In times that try our souls, none of us can afford to resign ourselves to “*soul sickness.*” By soul sickness, I mean a spiritual condition that not only decreases your spiritual bounce, but one that begins to rip holes in the very fabric of your spiritual integrity. Temptation and crisis are contributors to sickness of soul, and temptation in crisis is a state that presents itself to our corps on a daily basis. The symptoms of this sickness are spiritual dryness and emptiness; a lack of desire for the rejuvenating delights of faith; or, a greater desire for things inconsistent with your personal faith. Unfortunately, some of our members fall victim to this illness. *How is it with*

*your soul?* What are the desires of your spirit today? If the vital signs of your faith are indicating illness, seek the support of faithful spiritual leaders and friends. Honestly turn to those who can treat, minister to and heal you, but don't ensure spiritual illness alone. Contact your endorsing agent and seek his or her advice regarding a productive plan that will return you to the joy of your calling and the excellence of your service. Call out to your Creator and ask him to "*renew a right spirit within you.*" God is faithful and I pastorally remind you that he will answer you in your humility.

The second cause of a loss of spiritual resilience is normally a lack of self-leadership. In his book *Axiom*, Bill Hybels writes that "*at a certain velocity, most speed-hungry leaders will run out of the wherewithal to lead well...at a certain velocity, the soul will dissipate.*" We are a corps characterized by self-motivated spiritual leaders willing to run at a high velocity of ministry for extended periods. Are you running at a velocity that is dissipating your soul? Maintaining a high velocity of religious support requires that spiritual leaders are practicing the self-leadership required by their pace.

Dee Hock, the former CEO of VISA, expounds the need for 360 degree leadership; the reality that true leaders lead in all directions. Leaders typically understand the need to lead "south," which is the application of leadership towards subordinates, but Hock writes that leaders must lead upwardly towards their seniors and laterally towards their peers as well. Most surprisingly though, Hock reports that successful leaders focus 40 to 50 percent of their leadership inwardly in the practice of self-leadership. Self-leadership is not self-centeredness. Instead, self-leadership is the venue in which the true leader ensures their own resilience, development, and excellence of leadership so that they can most effectively lead others. Self-leadership is in efficiency terms, a best practice. As a Christian, I am reminded that Jesus himself took time to set himself apart to partake of the spiritual disciplines to ensure his own spiritual bounce. The religious diversity of our Chaplain Corps is replete with examples of historic religious figures who took moments apart for inspiration and resilience. They practiced self-leadership and every member of the Chaplain Corps must practice self-leadership consistent with their faith in order to best serve those that God has called you to serve.

When we run during physical training, we often sing familiar cadences to keep pace. Those cadences or "Jodie calls" not only keep us in step, but they also help facilitate our breathing as we run. The Army's current operational tempo has called us all to join in a long distance run of heart and soul that requires discipline, perseverance, and deep breathing to finish successfully. Wayne Cordeiro does a great job in his book *Leading on Empty* of describing the need for a spiritual leader to maintain a "life cadence" that includes daily, weekly and monthly spiritual practices that maintain the pace and depth of their spiritual lives. Are you "in step with the spirit" as you run this long race of leadership? Do you count off a "life cadence" that helps you maintain the pace of leadership in this midst of the high velocity challenge in which God's called you to serve? Your answers to those questions are gauges to the reality of your resilience. Each of us possesses the potential to establish those "cadences" so that we continue to receive the inspiration to bounce back and push further ahead in our spiritual missions.

### **What have you learned lately?**

In her book *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, Ruth Haley Barton writes that "*those who are looking to us for spiritual sustenance need us first and foremost to be spiritual seeker ourselves...they need us to keep searching for the bread of life that feeds our souls so we can guide them to places of sustenance for their own souls.*" When we maintain that quest, Haley Barton assures spiritual leaders "*then, rather than offering the cold stone of past devotionals, regurgitated apologetics or someone else's musings...we will have bread to offer that is warm from the oven of our intimacy with God.*" To build spiritual resilience in others and ourselves requires a commitment to life-long learning. In other words, the diligent spiritual leader is the ever developing spiritual leader.

In his book, *Why Great Men Fall*, Wayne Goodall writes that “*every leader is a life-long learner...and every leader is a reader.*” I can attest to the fact that all of our Army senior leadership are avid readers. In fact, the Army Chief of Staff, General George W. Casey, maintains a recommended reading list for all Soldiers on his website. Our senior leaders read to expand their minds not just so that they become smarter, but more importantly, so that they provide Soldiers with the best leadership possible. Those that are called to lead Soldiers are given a sacred trust, and if our leaders are not consistently improving their ability to lead our formations in peace and war, they put that trust at risk. I applaud them for taking their valuable time to protect that trust through life-long learning. The impact of spiritual leadership has eternal effects, thus the need for the spiritual leadership of our Chaplain Corps to remain informed and relevant is critical.

To ensure I lead by example, I do my best to maintain a consistent reading program. As I travel across our Army, I always have a book in my rucksack. Reading is one source of life-long learning and so are programs to advance our ministry skills. On our OCCH staff, a number of our chaplains and chaplain assistants are pursuing doctorates on their own time and at their own expense to ensure their personal readiness to best provide religious support to our Army. As I travel around our corps, I find that sort of self-leadership is a growing norm and I am proud of the initiative of our chaplains and chaplain assistants. As Hybels writes about diligent leaders in *Courageous Leadership*, “*we need to be willing to move out of our comfort zones, to learn new skills and disciplines...to put ourselves on intense growth tracks to read and reflect, to travel and seek training, to look for mentors, and to begin a non-stop search for best leadership models...to be humble enough to learn.*” One of the benefits of internet technology is that it now brings training and education to your web browser and inbox. Life in the Army is a challenge that sometimes restricts opportunities, but the opportunities to learn and grow are expanding at an ever increasing pace. Our strong spiritual leaders will continue to pursue the life-long learning required of Soldiers in this era of great challenge. Doing so will build spiritual resilience across the Army.

One resource our corps has established to assist you in maintaining your personal spiritual resilience and to help support your life-long learning as spiritual leaders is the Center for Spiritual Leadership (CSL) located at the Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS) at Fort Jackson. Entrusted with standing up the CSL to assist you are its Director, CH (COL) Mike Dugal; and his Deputy, CH (LTC) Randy Edwards. The CSL team has already begun to supply the Chaplain Corps with tailored spiritual development programs and products to advance life-long learning and to enhance the comprehensive spiritual fitness of our branch. The CSL is a growing resource to support the Chaplain Corps’ ability to remain spiritually resilient and its ability to empower the soul of our Army’s Soldiers. I encourage you to turn to CSL as an asset to ensure that you can consistently provide a positive answer to that personal inventory.

### **Why do I provide spiritual leadership?**

In the foreword to Tom Kolditz’s book *In Extremis Leadership*, Joe Pfeifer reminds us that “*leadership is really about the success of your people.*” Army leadership is really about the success of Soldiers. They are our charge; our sacred trust from the mothers and fathers of this Nation. Though they all volunteer, they are each entrusted to our care by their families; their parents, their spouses, and their children who now look to us to provide the spiritual leadership that ensures their Soldiers’ well being and success. All of our spiritual leadership and religious support is centered on the Soldier. As I said in the preceding section, we established the Center for Spiritual Leadership to help support the spiritual resilience of the Chaplain Corps, but by “caring for the care giver,” I seek to ensure your ability to keep caring as spiritual leaders.

General of the Army George C. Marshall said “*Today war...is not a succession of mere episodes in a day or a week. It is a long drawn out and intricately planned business and the longer it continues the heavier are the demands on the character of [those] engaged in it. With each succeeding month, with*

*each succeeding year, it makes heavier and more terrible demands on the mental and spiritual capacities and powers of [those] engaged in it.*” Those words are as true today as when he said them in 1941. The reality is that the “*spiritual capacities and powers*” of our Soldiers are diminished. General Casey has said that our Army is “*out of balance.*” He added that the stressors on our Soldiers and Families from the current operational tempo are “*unsustainable.*” The diminished spiritual capacities of our Soldiers and Families is now evident in increased drug and alcohol abuse, family dysfunction, indiscipline, and most unfortunately, the highest suicide rate in recorded history. Now more than ever, our Soldiers need resilient spiritual leaders empowered by the opportunity to lead Soldiers in the paths of righteousness and hope. They need spiritual leaders who can strongly proclaim to them a vision of a bright “hope and future.” They require spiritual leaders who will walk with them the “second mile” and then travel on to support them on the third, fourth and fifth miles of their spiritual journey. Our Chaplain Corps possesses its own spiritual needs and we will seek to meet them, but as Dr. Henry Cloud writes in *9 Things a Leader Must Do*, leaders move beyond their own needs and “*see life as a place to give.*” Today’s operational tempo is a great challenge, but with great challenge arises greater opportunity. Never in our collective tenure in the Army has the opportunity for the Chaplain Corps to provide strong spiritual leadership been more necessary or open. I charge you to see your units “as a place to give” and to see your Soldiers as sacred trusts to lead forward in faith.

In his book, *The Unforgiving Minute*, Craig M. Mullaney writes about how the diverse educational experiences of West Point, Ranger School, and his experience as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford all crystallized to guide him as a platoon leader in combat at Losano Ridge, Afghanistan. During the account of his Ranger School experience, he recalled his squad falling asleep around their perimeter after patrolling for 40 hours. The Ranger instructor woke up the squad by depressing the trigger on their machine gun and then told them he was taking them on a road march to help them stay awake. After several miles, the RI stopped the squad and asked the students why they were in Ranger School. Some replied “for the challenge.” One said “my platoon sergeant made me,” and many officers said they “had no choice.” The RI replied, “Wrong answer, Rangers... you are here for one reason... you are here for the troops you are going to lead... you are responsible for keeping them alive and accomplishing whatever mission you’re given... this is about them, it isn’t about you!” In the end, the Chaplain Corps’ own requirement for and pursuit of spiritual resilience is “not about us,” it is about our Soldiers. It is about the sacred trust God’s given us to spiritually lead Soldiers and Families in their journey of faith. It is, as we’ve always said, about “bringing God to Soldiers and Soldiers to God.” That charge is one of the most privileged leadership opportunities any spiritual leader can receive and I call on you to stay strong in the midst of it and to cherish it as you pursue it.

## **Conclusion**

As you reflect on the articles contained in this edition of *The Army Chaplaincy*, please employ the words and lessons provided as gauges to assess your spiritual resilience, as tools to increase your professional development, and as instruments to motivate your service on behalf of the Soldiers and Families under your care. Your spiritual leadership is mission essential and is making a tremendous difference in the life of our Army. Continue to fight the good fight as you provide religious support that daily enhances the souls of our Soldiers.

*Pro Deo et Patria!*

“Spiritual Leadership for the Army Family”



# From the Regimental SGM

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*SGM Tommy L. Marrero*

**A**s the Chief of Chaplains and I travel around the Army, we witness the dedication, enthusiasm, and the consistent pastoral care of our chaplains, chaplain assistants, and Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education. The outpouring of ministry and total commitment of our Unit Ministry Team members to enhance the spiritual life of our Soldiers, civilians and their families is unprecedented. Your selfless dedication is noted at all levels of the Army leadership. At the same time, we must be realistic about how much we can pour out of ourselves without replenishing ourselves. As leaders, we must act intentionally to ensure that each Unit Ministry Team member has the time, resources, training and education to ensure the self-replenishing measures that sustains spiritual resiliency.

In this edition of the *The Army Chaplaincy*, the topic and articles are both relevant and applicable to the Army and the Unit Ministry Team's current operational pace. This compilation of articles is a tremendous companion to our resiliency training provided through Chaplaincy Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) and its peer conferences around our corps, as well as, the resiliency efforts of the Center for Spiritual Leadership (CSL). The focal point of training around our corps for FY09 was *Renewing the Soldier's Mind* and these articles build on that theme by supporting our professional development and increasing our ability to support the spiritual resiliency of ourselves and others. As we move from the FY09 theme to FY10's theme, I ask that you employ your professional development in sustaining the resiliency of others around our Army by supporting the theme of *Spiritual Leadership: Building Army Strong Communities*.

Resilience is a required attribute for our Soldiers and ongoing operations make it even more essential. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership*, defines resilience as "showing a tendency to recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus." The FM further tells us that the resilient leader possess an "inner drive that compels them to keep going" during times of challenge and stress. Not only do resilient leaders keep themselves going, more importantly, their communicable resiliency helps keep their organizations going as well. In that light, it is clear that our Army, now more than ever, needs spiritual leaders who are resilient leaders. You have proved your mettle and the Chief and I encourage and call on you to maintain your spiritual resilience as you continue to provide outstanding leadership across our Army.

The members of our Chaplain Corps carry in their rucksacks brilliant tools of spiritual resilience gained through their experiences, relationships, education, and spiritual journey. They are spiritual leaders, in their own formations, bouncing back powerfully. We applaud our Chaplain Corps team for its contribution to the Soldier's spiritual fitness and we call on each of you to share the tools and resources of your "rucksacks," in the effort to spread spiritual resiliency around our Chaplain Corps and our Army.

The Chief of Chaplains and I ask you to read, reflect upon, and share these articles as you "re-fill your canteens of knowledge and resilience." May God continue to empower you and enhance your ministry of religious support to our Army! Thanks for all you are doing everyday! For God and Country!

*Pro Deo et Patria!*

*SGM Tommy L. Marrero serves as the  
Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains and Regimental SGM.*

# Commandant's Notes

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*Chaplain (COL) Samuel J.T. Boone*

**S**piritual resilience may be a new term but it describes a reality at the core of the Chaplaincy. It is what we bring to the fight. It is why General George Washington demanded that Congress provide chaplains for the Continental Army and why countless chaplains and chaplain assistants have earned the trust, support and thankfulness of their commanders and Soldiers since then.

We are extremely fortunate to have the Center for Spiritual Leadership as part of the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School. They contribute every day to our efforts as we seek to increase the spiritual resilience of our students and to develop the capabilities of chaplains and chaplain assistants to increase the spiritual resilience of those with whom we serve.

Our domain at the USACHCS is a spiritual one and we seek to improve our performance and that of our graduates. However, we are also developing partnerships with those working in the other resilience domains and incorporating their insights and techniques into our training. For almost four years, we have collaborated with Department of the Army, Army Medical Command and TRADOC to focus our curriculum on resilience issues and programs. We were early adopters of the Battlemind program and fully expect to be early adopters on other resilience programs as they are fielded. We are exploring lengthening our courses and expanding our staff to become more robust in training counseling and spiritually-based behavioral health.

Expect to see more of us in the spiritual resilience area as we develop our ability to use digital platforms such as the Religious Support Operations System (RSOS) and University of Military Ministry (UMM) to support unit and individual training. This year, we are working with DACH and AMEDD to increase the availability of Pastoral Counseling training (both Clinical and Family Life) to the field. After the first of the year, we will launch a program to expand preaching proficiency among battalion chaplains by using the collaborative features of UMM to pair them with selected mentors, coaches and teachers from their faith groups.

I began by saying that spiritual resilience is at the core of our mission. What we do as chaplains and chaplain assistants improves the spiritual resilience of the people who look to us for leadership. Every time we do a religious service, teach, counsel, conduct a Strong Bonds retreat or care for others, we improve the resilience of America's Army in a time of persistent conflict. If we do it smarter, faster, better and take care of our own resilience, so much the better!

***Pro Deo et Patria!***

*Religious Support and Spiritual Resilience start here!*

*Chaplain (COL) Samuel J.T. Boone serves as the  
Commandant, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School.*



# From the USACHCS CSM

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*CSM Marylena McCrimmon*

**I**f you hit a rock with another rock hard enough, at least one rock will break.

Luckily, people are not rocks. They adapt, adjust and change in the face of insults and injuries. This is what we mean by resilience. Given what we are experiencing now, it is fortunate that Soldiers are exceptionally resilient.

You can see how Soldier resilience is developed at physical training (PT) or combatatives training. Just watching it hurts. Bodies are challenged and blows exchanged. Injuries, however, are rare if the cadre are monitoring and calibrating carefully. Also, there is an important spirit in the group that supports and encourages individuals to go for more, but also cares for members of their team, squad or platoon and watches out for individuals.

The lessons of PT are also good for resilience, and in particular, spiritual resilience.

Care is the first lesson. If individuals know each other as buddies or fellow Soldiers, they are more apt to take care of one another than if they are strangers. Spirit is the second lesson. Spirit is that element that causes Soldiers to take care of one another.

The pastoral care of chaplains and chaplain assistants expands the circle of caring for Soldiers beyond the team, squad, or platoon to include those others who are also members of the Army Family, especially to those who for one reason or another feel left out or alienated. Pastoral care events provide opportunities for monitoring, calibrating, and intervening off the PT field. All the science shows that most of the behavioral evils that plague our world decline when we know what to do, how to recognize the warning signs and act to get help to people who need it.

Soldier spirit is the key to Soldier resilience. Every worship opportunity, every UMT-sponsored event, every one-on-one interaction between a chaplain or chaplain assistant is a chance to increase the Soldier's sense of being valued and a part of something greater than his or herself. Chaplains and chaplain assistants need to recognize this element in their role and mission. Our planning, resource management, training, and staff work is all directed at increasing Soldier spirit and resilience.

One last point, as part of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, our own spiritual resilience is a prerequisite to providing support to others. We must insure that we do not neglect the care of those performing the chaplaincy's mission. Their spirit is important to the fight. Know, watch, and act to help those working beside us.

***For God and Country!***

***“Religious Support Starts Here”***

*CSM Marylena McCrimmon serves as the  
U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School Command Sergeant Major.*

# Spiritual Resiliency and the Senior Chaplain's Role

*[Jesus said,] "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace." — Matthew 11:28-30, MSG*

*There is a way of life so hid with Christ in God that in the midst of the day's business one is inwardly lifting brief prayers, short [bursts] of praise, subdued whispers of adoration and of tender love to the Beyond that is within. — Thomas P. Kelly, A Testament of Devotion*

*What do I need to put into my own life that will enable me to reap the most out of having the privilege to participate in such a noble profession and, in turn, experience a more meaningful personal life in the process? — Robert Wicks, The Resilient Clinician*

*By Chaplain (COL) Mike Dugal*

The Army demands a chaplaincy that is spiritually resilient. The required spiritual care of our nation's Soldiers falls on no other branch, especially during a time of persistent conflict. Our individual and collective responses to this demanding task of being resilient may be met through a proper understanding, shared discourse, and a modeling and mentoring process regarding spiritual resiliency. The initial step may be the deliberate establishment of a discourse community within the chaplaincy for the specific purpose of spiritual resiliency dialogue. This article is an attempt to define spiritual resiliency from a devotional perspective, through a Christian lens, for the purpose of present and future dialogue.

A liberal definition of spiritual resiliency is the inner-life ability to respond to life's stressors, adversity or traumatic events and proceed in life without diminishment (chronic symptoms) to the soul (inner-life). From my Christian *weltanschauung* (world view), this inner-life ability to respond to life's stressors is dependent on a relationship with the Living God as revealed through Jesus the Christ and is sustained by the imminent and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. This inner-life ability is not confined to the psyche or the physical. It is part of man's metaphysical constitution. It results from a passionate trust in a living God who promises never to abandon us. Brennan Manning writes, "Based on the lived experience of God's relentless faithfulness, a confidence blossoms that God is with us to continue and finish what he started."<sup>1</sup> Such is promised to the believers at Philippi as recorded in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle Paul disclosed to the Corinthian believers the time he reached ultimate despair. After this self-disclosure he affirmed, "But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."<sup>3</sup> This same apostle in another letter writes, "... but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."<sup>4</sup> The concept of resiliency established through a spiritual connectedness with the living God is a constant theme throughout the Judeo-Christian sacred writings. Spiritual resiliency is present from the Hebrew children's debarkation from Egyptian slavery,<sup>5</sup> to the unnamed saints affirmed by a heavenly voice as recorded by the Apostle John. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did

not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”<sup>6</sup>

A simple review of the Judeo-Christian sacred texts reveals spiritual resiliency to be the consummation of a life (not to exclude death) when challenged with extreme life stressors to still proclaim that God is the source of their hope. “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.”<sup>7</sup> Also, we read the following from the Book of Habakkuk:

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.<sup>8</sup>

Contemporary resiliency research may affirm what the ancients experienced as they placed their faith in Jehovah. People have the ability to experience healing from extreme injuries and life-shattering experiences.<sup>9</sup> “We have the ability to draw meaning and value out of horrible experiences. Painful memories can be neutralized by finding gifts in the experience.”<sup>10</sup> Trauma survivors continually testify to the power of faith and religion in assisting them toward healing, recovery, and finding meaning in life’s apparent challenges.<sup>11</sup> “Religion fulfills the critical function of providing a sense of purpose in the face of terrifying realities by placing suffering in a larger context and by affirming the commonality of suffering across generations.”<sup>12</sup>

There are numerous questions to be addressed as we enter into dialogue about spiritual resiliency with our colleagues, subordinates, supervisory chaplains and our mental health colleagues. The following are questions I plan to address in the remaining portion of this article: What is the role of the supervisory chaplain regarding spiritual resiliency?; What can be done to enhance spiritual resiliency?; and What are the benefits of a spiritually resilient chaplaincy?

*What is the role of the supervisory chaplain regarding spiritual resiliency?* The supervisory or senior chaplain needs to recognize that their rank or position places them on a pedestal within the community where they serve. I define a senior chaplain as anyone who wears the rank of lieutenant colonel or higher. Subordinate chaplains, chaplain assistants, and Soldiers are wide-eyed and ready to judge whether the senior chaplain is a person of spiritual character and perseverance. Their daily interaction with people and responses to community stressors reveal if they are spiritually resilient. The role of the supervisory chaplain is simple; model spiritual resilience before the community. Today’s Soldier expects nothing less from any chaplain other than for them to model spiritual resiliency. Such modeling provides hope.

Ruth Haley Barton, a noted Christian leader and director, argues that spiritual resiliency in leadership roles is contingent upon “that place where God’s spirit and my spirit commune. . . It depends on our willingness to lead from a place of communion with him.”<sup>13</sup> Such communion forms the space for vulnerability and constant dependence. “The choice to lead from the soul is a vulnerable approach. It means I am leading from a tender place where I do not have all the answers.”<sup>14</sup>

Modeling spiritual resiliency requires deliberate actions by the senior chaplain. Dr. Robert Wicks, professor at Maryland’s Loyola College and a recognized expert in the prevention of secondary stress, argues the self-care of one’s interior life is the key to resiliency. “Time away for reflection is too valuable to lose because of ignorance or hidden anxiety.”<sup>15</sup> He continues,

It is important to recognize that the self is a limited entity that can be depleted if we don’t involve ourselves seriously in a process of self-care that includes self-knowledge. . . Unfortunately, with busy schedules, such time for structured self-awareness often isn’t undertaken as often and regularly as it should be.<sup>16</sup>

Our Army leadership remains committed to set aside time for rest and refitting as units return from combat. The idea behind dwell time is for the deliberate and intentional purpose of self-care and reflection. Wicks proposes when sufficient time is not devoted for reflection then the result is loss of

perspective and self-delusion.<sup>17</sup> This loss of perspective and self-delusion reflects what well-known pastor, scholar, and author Eugene Peterson recognizes among ministers as “the crisis of ‘undercapitalized vocation.’ Many simply do not have what it takes to spiritually fund their ministry undertakings in such a way that they are endowed with staying power.”<sup>18</sup> It is my conclusion that this staying power is synonymous to Saint Paul’s perseverance and what we call spiritual resiliency.

Dr. Wil Hernandez of the Leadership Institute in Southern California supports Peterson’s thought about staying power. Hernandez argues those involved in ministry need to be aware of the personal requirement to “possess a strong spiritual interior able to stand up to the exterior demands of ministry.”<sup>19</sup> I was personally able to deal with the exterior demands of Operation Anaconda in 2002 because of the modeling displayed by senior chaplains for the first 12 years of my chaplaincy journey. They mentored and invested themselves for the purpose of building staying power in young chaplains such as myself.

Peterson and Hernandez agree that such spiritual interior or staying power emanates from the ongoing process called formation. “The only ‘interior’ spirituality that can support us through our ongoing process of formation in Christ is that which firmly roots itself in an abiding communion with God.”<sup>20</sup> Jesus reminded his disciples, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>21</sup>

In 2002, Chaplain (COL) Gary Sexton forewarned the Army Chaplaincy about the flooding demands in a digital age:

The Dot.com Generation struggles with life and ministry at the speed of electrons. Digitized disciples in a digitized Army. While there is efficiency in the management of information, the human soul requires a more deliberate and sustained cultivation. Multitasking may enhance the way we engage the business of life. But spiritual depth and strength require periods of singular focus and concentration.<sup>22</sup>

I argue it is the role of the supervisory chaplain to model this strong “interior” spirituality through a deliberate and intentional self-care program based on reflection and self-knowledge. “When we have a gentle, healthy, and strong inner life, we are a part of the healing stillness in the world which offers places of hope to all who suffer and yearn for justice, solace, and encouragement.”<sup>23</sup> Out of this strong inner life the supervisory chaplain is able to assist their community in formulating a new reality and to bring sense out of chaos. “This normalizing role of affirming traumatic experiences and assisting in the creation of new meaning is a very important one for survivors of traumatic experiences.”<sup>24</sup> The senior chaplain is the image of spiritual resiliency.

*What can be done to enhance spiritual resiliency?* I have already stated the need for a strong interior spirituality. I am convinced spiritual resiliency arises out of a faith response as one faces traumatic life stressors. It is during these traumatic stress-filled times when we may be able to relate to the lamentation psalms of the Jewish warrior David. Reggie McNeal in *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* uses the term “cauldron of conflict” as God’s shaping mechanism in David’s life. During conflicting and stressful times the leader undergoes an interior process. “Each instance forces a redefinition of the leader’s mission, values, and actions. Through conflict, the leader’s heart can grow haughty and hard, ruthless, even punitive. On the other hand, conflict can enlarge the leader’s dependence on God for deliverance.”<sup>25</sup> In Psalm 63 David writes, “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus, we may conclude that spiritual resiliency is enhanced through humility and relinquishment. This journey into the rugged terrain of the inner self-life reshapes the leader. Richard Foster, a well-known author regarding prayer and spirituality, cites Abraham, Moses, David, Paul, and even Jesus as luminaries regarding relinquishment. “Struggle is an essential feature in the prayer of relinquishment.”<sup>27</sup> Foster argues

that the prayer of relinquishment is a “bona fide letting go, but it is a release with hope. We have no fatalist resignation. We are buoyed up by a confident trust in the character of God.”<sup>28</sup>

During times of relinquishment I choose to return to the spiritual discipline of *lectio divina*, sacred reading. This is the time for contemplation, quiet meditation, and reflection. As Thomas Keating, an expert on centering prayer, writes, “The essence of contemplation is the trusting and living faith by which God both elevates the human person and purifies the conscious and unconscious obstacles in us that oppose the values of the gospel and the work of the Spirit.”<sup>29</sup> *Lectio* brings the participant to a point of lingering and longing for God. “It is the savoring of the text, a leisurely lingering in divine revelation.”<sup>30</sup> Howard R. Macy, in *Rhythms of the Inner Life*, defines this leisurely lingering as longing. “Longing for God is a steady movement of the heart, one that runs deeper than any action or emotion. This longing is the root of any significant spiritual growth, and it must not be dismissed flippantly as mere style or temperament.”<sup>31</sup>

This article has addressed the role of the supervisory chaplain regarding spiritual resiliency and has provided one practice of the spiritual disciplines, *lectio divina*, which attributes to spiritual resiliency being enhanced during times of stress and trauma. Now comes the final question regarding the purpose of this article.

*What are the benefits of a spiritually resilient chaplaincy?* The first benefit of a spiritually resilient chaplaincy is a healthier community. When chaplains minister to Soldiers and their family members from a strong inner spirituality, the result will be healthier Soldiers, families, and communities. Spiritual ministry conducted out of a strong inner spirituality “is not about roles and titles within organizational hierarchies; it has to do with our desire and ability to recognize and respond to the presence of God.”<sup>32</sup>

The second benefit is the continuance of a vibrant and capable chaplain corps ministering to tomorrow’s Army. This vibrant ministry capability (spiritual authority) is a byproduct of the chaplain’s experience with God as they undergo the maturity process.<sup>33</sup> This spiritual authority is not constrained or restricted by rank, however it is the result of a leader faithfully learning God’s lessons through the valley of the shadow of death.

The Army demands a chaplaincy that is spiritually resilient. This article briefly discussed and provided examples of spiritual resiliency from a personal Christian worldview. I addressed the role of the supervisory chaplain while describing how *lectio divina* can enhance spiritual resiliency. I concluded the article by providing two observable benefits of a spiritually resilient chaplaincy.

The topic of spiritual resiliency must be continually explored as we gather with peers and colleagues in dialogue. Our Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist colleagues need to join the dialogue and provide a better understanding from non-Christian perspectives. I trust this article will stir you to engage with your colleagues, subordinates, and senior chaplains regarding the topic of spiritual resiliency.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Brennan Manning, *Ruthless Trust* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 23.

<sup>2</sup>Philippians 1:6, New International Version (NIV).

<sup>3</sup>2 Corinthians 1:10, NIV.

<sup>4</sup>Romans 5:3, NIV.

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 15:1-18, NIV.

<sup>6</sup>Revelation 12:11, NIV.

<sup>7</sup>Job 19:25, NIV.

<sup>8</sup>Habakkuk 3:17-18, NIV.

<sup>9</sup>Al Siebert, *The Resiliency Advantage* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005), 189.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Polly Young-Eisendrath, *The Resilient Spirit: Transforming Suffering into Insight and Renewal* (USA: Da Capo Press, 1996), 86.

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- <sup>13</sup>Ruth Haley Barton "Is My Leadership Spiritual," *Christianity Today*, (2006), [www.christianitytoday.com/le/2006/003/14.75.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2006/003/14.75.html) (accessed May 7, 2009).
- <sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup>Robert Wicks, *The Resilient Clinician* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 135-136.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 127.
- <sup>18</sup>Eugene H. Peterson, "Missing Ingredient," *Christian Century* (March 22, 2003): 30.
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- <sup>23</sup>Wicks, *Resilient Clinician*, 109.
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- <sup>26</sup>Psalm 63:1, NIV.
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- <sup>32</sup>Barton, "Leadership Spiritual," 2006.
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*Chaplain (COL) Mike Dugal serves as the Director of the Center for Spiritual Leadership located at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School. He recently graduated from the U.S. Army War College (Class of 2009). This paper was adapted from one of his writing assignments.*



# Why Comprehensive Soldier Fitness? A Personal and Organizational Perspective

(**Editor's Note:** This manuscript was adapted from transcripts of an oral presentation at the Strategic Leader Development Training at Hilton Head, S.C., March 7-14, 2009.)

*By BG Rhonda Cornum*

I really do think that the Chaplain Corps has a huge amount to do with the overall fitness of our Soldiers and, in the future, could have a lot more. So, I am going to talk about this new initiative. The (U.S. Army) Chief of Staff (General George W. Casey) wanted us to find a way of looking at Soldiers' mental, spiritual, and physical health as a continuum from the time they enlist until they leave; to find ways to improve their overall fitness, not waiting until they have some negative outcome and then applying all the resources after the fact.

Why was I selected to do this? I suspect it is because I have believed in this, believed that it's important, and believed that we can improve Soldier resiliency, for a long time. So, if we can improve everybody's resilience, we have an overall better performance. Now, everyone has different potential. Just like we can't make everyone that comes in the Army able to run a six-minute mile, we can make everybody that comes in the Army able to run faster than the day they joined. That's how it is with the other domains of fitness.

We can't make everybody into another John McCain, but we can make everybody more resilient than they were. That is our goal.

So, this is Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (right figure) and the vision is an Army of healthy, self-confident people moving forward; resilient and able to face whatever challenges come along. The mission of the Comprehensive Fitness Office is to develop and institute that program so that we can deliberately get there, and not just hope it happens.

I thought that we would emphasize spiritual fitness with this particular group. I searched and asked a group of people, "What's your spiritual fitness?" Spiritual fitness must be inclusive of everybody's faith group (or lack of faith group); but everyone needs strength of the human spirit.

Overall, the CSF program intends to impress this onto Soldiers by increasing their strength in all of these things. Soldiers and commanders and NCOs are not going to be excited if we don't have some performance outcome to be measured. We don't just want to ask people if they "feel" like they're more resilient, we have to have some evidence that it's true. To ensure the Army continues to invest in increasing resilience, we have to demonstrate that it improves readiness and mission effectiveness.

It will take some cultural change. Historically, we have spent a huge amount of time on tactical performance and we've spent a huge amount of time on physical performance, and we have just hoped that those other things would just come along. And perhaps when the Army was not busy, the hope

## ***Comprehensive Soldier Fitness***

**Program Intent:** Increase the resilience of Soldiers and Families by developing five dimensions of strength:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- ***Spiritual***
- Family



**ARMY STRONG.**

method was acceptable. Like the late 80's, when the most exciting deployment was the six weeks to Germany for a REFORGER; and the most stressful thing was getting drunk at the end of it and rolling out of your bunk (zipped inside the sleeping bag) and cracking your head. And in the 90's, when, except for the seven months of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the biggest deployment was to a National Training Center. We probably did have time to just hope that people would become immersed in the Army culture and the Army values by just staying there a long time. Currently, we just don't have the luxury to do that. Now, we are asking very young, very junior people to do very difficult things. Clearly we needed a better plan.

We bring people into the Army with a very wide spectrum of experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and "baggage" of all sorts. During initial entry training, they go up and down; they have small successes and they have small failures, and they go along at their usual baseline level of psychological functioning. Then they go to their units. They may deploy, and see some ugly events in the war. Or, they may experience other negative events -- it could be their car, their mother could have cancer, the spouse or significant other leaves. Unfortunately, "we" have been telling Soldiers and families for the last decade that they will go through this negative event and then inevitably go down the PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) path. No, maybe not "we" as in the people in this room, but "we" as in the media and some well-intended professionals. And then this same group says "Don't worry, you'll get down here. And when you finally have PTSD, we will treat you." We don't even tell them, "You'll get better." We just tell them, "We'll treat you." What if I walked into an orthopedic surgeon's office with knee instability, and he said, "You have a ripped anterior cruciate ligament. You need a repair, but it probably won't make you any better." I would not get treatment. People want treatment with the expectation of success. If we want people who do need some assistance to come forward and get it, we've got to have some expectation education.

Additionally, we need to educate them on the most likely outcomes from going through an adverse event, not the worst possible outcome. Just take people who are not in the military, who have not been told to expect to go down the PTSD path. Looking at the population of people who have had some potentially traumatic event, first of all, some people will look at that same event as simply adverse. It would be unpleasant, expensive, painful, whatever it is, but it won't be "traumatic," just adverse. Unfortunately, as a society, we have started "catastrophizing." We look at an event and immediately focus on all the worst outcomes it could possibly have. We have predisposed people to look at events as traumatic. But if we just ask questions like, "What do you think about your event?," most people actually describe some kind of post-traumatic growth. They may say, "You know, it was bad, but I actually came out stronger. I came back with a better ability as a leader. I came out with more self-confidence. I came out with a renewed sense of purpose." Now that does not mean they won't have stress symptoms. Many of them will. You've got to have some stress or you won't grow from it at all; you'll just continue on at steady state. But we don't prepare people for the potential. We don't tell people that even if you have post-traumatic stress, normal stress reaction, most people get better by themselves. Most people will get better, whether by themselves or with help, and they'll get back to their baseline. They won't just fall off the cliff.

But what we have never done is to improve the baseline performance in all of those domains, which is truly increasing resilience. With a better baseline, moving people towards more resilience *prior* to a problem, more people will see more events as simply adverse and not traumatic. That would be a really huge benefit. It doesn't have to be something dramatic, like getting your helicopter shot up and shot down. It can be something as simple as flipping your car, and how you react to that. One day, (I was) driving about 75 miles an hour and flipped my truck and rolled down a hill. I destroyed the truck, obviously. I was fortunate, had my seatbelt on, and crawled out. I wasn't hurt. And eventually, I got a ride home. Because my spouse (always on a trip when these things happen) was not home, I got in his car and went to work, and that was the end of it. It was unpleasant. It cost some money. It was inconvenient to have to go buy

another pickup, but certainly not traumatic.

Recently, a friend of mine experienced the same thing. She was going 20 miles an hour and flipped her car. It rolls down the hill, a different place by the way, and she also gets out. Also not hurt. But for her, it was a traumatic event. She wouldn't drive down that street, in fact, wouldn't drive at all for the next several weeks. They were essentially identical events (totally destroyed vehicle; person not hurt). The important point is, *how a person reacts* to an event is the issue, not the event itself.

There is a lot of work in the literature about post-traumatic growth, starting with the work of Drs. Tedeschi and Calhoun in the mid-90's. What they say in their publications is what many people have "discovered," and I discovered in 1991. When I started speaking about my Prisoner of War experience, I actually described "Post Traumatic Growth," though I had no name for it then. But, I truly felt I was a better doctor, having experienced a life-threatening medical problem. I felt better able to set priorities. I felt that my self-confidence was now based on fact, not hope. There was clearly a greater appreciation of family. We didn't have very much of that "terrible teenage thing." Not only did I appreciate my daughter more, but I would have to say that she, who was 13 at the time, appreciated me more, too.

If you "Google" post-traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder, you will find a huge pile of things. If you search post-traumatic growth you find one third the number of "hits." Why is that? Probably for the same reason that if you look at the number of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Device) in Iraq, you see a huge number; if you look at number of schools being built, you see a very small number. People just seem not very excited about reporting good news. We don't teach people about the potential for post-traumatic growth; we don't even give them an opportunity to validate it if they have it. A Soldier needs a strong sense of self to recognize post-traumatic growth in the face of the blitz of infomercials telling him he'll be ruined for life by going to war.

Back to Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. We need to look at psychological fitness just like we do physical fitness. You come in the Army and you take a PT test, and most people are somewhere in between barely passing (200) and the maximum (300). There are a few super studs out there, getting over 300 on the "extended scale" and a few flunk. But the vast majority of the Army is in between. We test it every six months and we have a training program, both unit based and individually based. And we attempt to improve the fitness of everyone. The important parts are: we test and train *everyone*, not just those Soldiers about to deploy and not just the people who flunk.

If the ONLY time the PT test was administered was 30 days prior to deployment, the average fitness would be a lot lower than it is today. If we agree that psychological fitness is as important as physical fitness, we realize we must assess fitness continuously over the life cycle of the Soldier, not just screen for disease immediately before deployment. We need to assess routinely, and then train routinely. We don't wait to train someone how to use their weapon until 30 days prior to deployment; we do it throughout their careers. But when it comes to psychological fitness, we wait until somebody has "flunked." We wait until somebody has some negative outcome or some symptom complex that drives them to a program or therapy. And, if we only did physical training with people who flunked the PT test, once again, we would not have the very robust physical fitness program. We need to not only be able to assess everybody and then we need to have a program that moves people this way in those other domains (emotional, spiritual, family and social) as well as physical.

We have not in the past routinely assessed spiritual, social, emotional or family fitness. We haven't specifically trained resilient thinking skills; we don't do it in a true preventative way. How do we prevent heart attacks? We prevent heart attacks by lifestyle changes. If we only addressed peoples' blood pressure, blood lipid levels, body fat and aerobic capacity *after* they had their heart attack, it would not be effective. But, that is what we have done with mental health. We have only addressed issues after a negative event or symptoms developed. If we want to have a preventative program, we must start with lifestyle changes

early. We need to train those positive life coping skills and resilient thinking skills before Soldiers have a traumatic event, not after.

Additionally, we don't link programs with those who need them. We have some quality, evidence-based family programs, some of which are really quite good. But instead of having an assessment and determining who would really benefit from participating, we let people volunteer. So we primarily end up with people who have the insight to think they need it, or if they have a good relationship and want to make it better.

Unfortunately, we don't historically send people to training until after they have the problem. I call that the under-200 mark. Once the Soldier has bounced a check, had a physical altercation with his spouse, shaken or otherwise abused a child, had a hot urinalysis, or got a DUI, the Soldier gets sent to training. Now, the number of people who are retained after those bad events is rather low. If we want to have these programs be really cost-effective, then we need to link Soldiers with training before they've had one of those truly negative-outcome events. We need an assessment, then depending on how one does on that assessment, you will get directed to education and training.

The key elements of CSF are: 1) Self-assessment tool (Global Assessment Tool); 2) Mandatory Resilience training in all TRADOC Leadership schools; 3) Self-development queued by the results of the assessment; and 4) Master Resiliency Trainers, teaching leaders to instill resilience in subordinates.

We will have routine training in every leadership school. There will be progressive and sequential training in every leader development school up to the Sergeants' Major Academy and Pre-Command Course. For more junior folks, it's making yourself more resilient; it's how the mental and spiritual aspects can affect unit effectiveness. And, then, specific, you know, the pre- and post-deployment and intra-deployment education for people who are having no specific challenges. The Global Assessment Tool will be applied every two years, so that individuals can see how they're improving, and the Army can see what training did or didn't "work," so it can be improved if it didn't. This is important.

There is a lot of training available and required, and we really don't know if it is effective. Since we didn't start with a plan to determine if it is effective, everybody's afraid to stop doing it in case it is. We do not want to add any more of that, so only training that has been proven to be effective is being endorsed by CSF for inclusion. To build the Global Assessment Tool, we got the best we could find; civilian academic and military psychologists who are experts at doing psychological health surveys. And we developed the software application (Soldier Fitness Tracker) to tie all of the inputs together.

And, lastly, is the strategic communication plan. A STRATCOM plan is essential, because this truly is changing how the Army looks at itself. We have a lot of literature that says the strength of the Army is really the strength of the Soldier, and it's not just physical strength, but it's moral courage. We say it, but heretofore, we haven't actually measured it and we haven't actually trained it. The other important thing about the strategic communication plan is there will be some people who will look for something negative about it. They may try to say that the Army is trying to save money, trying to deny services, trying to do some other negative thing. It is important to emphasize, there is no intent to deny anybody anything they need. Comprehensive Soldier Fitness is not designed to take anything away from anybody. It is designed to make people more resilient so there will be fewer people who need those services.

The Soldier Fitness Tracker (SFT) is a software application that will integrate the assessment, the training, and other data bases in the Army. A Soldier takes the Global Assessment, and immediately gets the results. At the same time, a menu of available training appears in the Army Career Tracker page. Whether the training is in the spiritual, emotional, social or family domains, at least one for each of those domains will be web-based learning. This is critical, as the training must be accessible to all the components, including geographically-dispersed active Soldiers. There may be places, like Fort Hood with 60,000 folks, where there might be actual local courses as well. The Soldier will have the option.

In the Army, is physical fitness tied to mental fitness? People believe it is, but we have not measured it. Now we will be able to demonstrate that. This is just a demonstration of what we expect to happen. It will start with Basic Resilience Training in initial entry. Right now there is a study ongoing at Fort Jackson. We are looking at military resilience training and sports psychology training to see what actually is working and what isn't in terms of their marksmanship, their PT test scores, their leadership.

The fourth pillar is training Master Resilience Trainers, leaders who will instill resilience in their subordinates. There is a Resilience Center at the University of Pennsylvania where they have been teaching teachers how to instill resilience in their students for close to 20 years. In conjunction with them, we have begun training our drill sergeants and other junior leaders and they are coming back with the greater ability to instill resilience in their subordinates.

Part of changing the culture is to look at psychology like any other risk issue. When we talk about malaria, we talk about what commanders need to do. They assess risks; is it high or low? They mitigate risk at the unit level, drain swamps, and spray for mosquitoes. They also mitigate risk at the individual level, making sure they wear sleeves down, put on bug spray, and take their pills. And then, if the Soldier gets malaria anyway, send him to the medics, and they'll take care of him and get him back to the fight. We need to do the same thing with behavioral health issues. There are things you can do at the unit level to decrease the potential risks (good realistic training, good leadership, resilience training). There are things one can do at the individual Soldier level (buddy system, individual development), and we should be doing them. But, if they get psychological stress symptoms regardless, if they get depression, PTSD, or anxiety, then the expectation should be that we're going to refer them to somebody who can make them better and get them back to the fight. We the command structure, we the medical community, we the chaplain community, should be telling them that, "You participate in this. We have the expectation you will improve and get back to the fight."

In CSF, we still believe in "Army Strong." But it has morphed just a bit. We say, "Army Strong: Strong Minds, Strong Bodies!"



*Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum is the Director of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness in the Army G-3/5/7. She was commissioned into the Army and began a research career in 1978, after receiving her Ph.D. in nutrition and biochemistry from Cornell University. From 1982-1986, she attended medical school at the Uniformed Services University, received her M.D., and completed a General Surgical Internship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In 1987, she transferred to the Army Aeromedical Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., first as Chief, Primary Care and Community Medicine, then Chief of Aviation Medicine. In 1989, research again became her primary duty as Chief, Crew Life Support Branch at the Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory, also at Fort Rucker. Her research was interrupted by the Persian Gulf conflict. In August 1990, she was assigned as the flight surgeon to the 2/229 Attack Helicopter Battalion. During the last week of February 1991, while performing a search and rescue mission for a downed Air Force F-16 pilot, her Blackhawk helicopter was shot down. Five of the eight-person crew were killed. The three survivors, including BG Cornum, were captured by Iraqi forces. She was repatriated on March 6, 1991. Among her other assignments, she commanded the 28th Combat Support Hospital at Fort Bragg, N.C.; commanded Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, and served as the surgeon for U.S. Army Forced Command, Fort McPherson, Ga. Her decorations include the Legion of Merit (with two oak leaf clusters), Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (with four oak leaf clusters), Purple Heart, Air Medal, POW Medal and others.*

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# The Human, Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of Leadership in Preparation for Combat<sup>1</sup>

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*If I learned nothing else from the war, it taught me the falseness of the belief that wealth, material resources, and industrial genius are the real sources of a nation's military power. These are but the stage setting . . . national strength lies only in the hearts and spirits of men. — S.L.A. Marshall<sup>2</sup>*

*By Dr. John W. Brinsfield and Chaplain (LTC) Peter A. Baktis*

In the quest to reexamine and possibly redefine the Army profession, the key roles, skills, and knowledge required of military leaders are indispensable elements for analysis. No profession can compete with competent outsiders without defining itself, its special expertise requirements, and its solutions to the problems of transformation in perceived influence, power allocation, internal organization, and organization of knowledge to support its special claims to jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

The historical mission and jurisdiction of the joint military services are to win the nation's wars. Traditionally, all other missions were secondary to this national security responsibility. Yet, at the beginning of the 21st century, our conception of America's security umbrella has been broadened to include domestic police, fire, and drug enforcement activities as well as international humanitarian and peacekeeping missions — to the detriment, some would say, of the Army's main war-fighting role. In fact, the system of professions within which the Army competes is crowded with American government entities such as the other military services, the State Department, Border Patrol, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and a growing cadre of commercial contractors performing battlefield tasks. The nation's formerly well-integrated system of professions addressing security has mushroomed "without a commensurate expansion in the legal, cultural, or workplace mechanisms that legitimate each profession's jurisdiction."<sup>4</sup> Mission creep and the post-11 September 2001 ethos, combined with an erosion of the professional military culture by the commercialization of traditional military roles, have challenged the Army's understanding of its role in the nation's defense.

Moreover, in the quest to establish its professional boundaries, the Army has had to rely on a civilian leadership often having little or no experience in the military for its mission definition and resources, all the while competing with the lure of college and the job market for the hearts, minds and purses of the recruits who may become its future leaders.<sup>5</sup> These challenges, among many others, seem to require a redefinition of the components of military professionalism and leadership for the future.

Soldiers are the Army's heart, life force, and strength no matter what their mission may be. They determine the Army's effectiveness, success, or possible failure. They must respond to the unique

demands of the profession of arms: total commitment, unlimited liability, possible lengthy separations from family, community, and civilian primary support systems; and total loyalty to a values-based and service-based organization. In time of war, they may be asked to sacrifice themselves for the nation and for one another as guardians of the republic.

The new warrior ethos that assigns many of the skills and responsibilities traditionally reserved for officers to enlisted soldiers challenges traditional roles and definitions in the profession of arms. Likewise, the advent of new technological tools of war threatens to ignore the human dimension. Any internal analysis and definition of the profession of arms must include, therefore, an inquiry into the soldier's human, spiritual, and ethical needs, lest, to paraphrase the words of one Civil War general, they be asked for more than they could possibly be expected to give.<sup>6</sup>

As part of such an effort, this chapter seeks to analyze the human and spiritual needs of soldiers as part of the special knowledge required by Army leaders to motivate, train, and command their personnel and their units in peace and war. It also suggests some considerations for preparing soldiers psychologically, spiritually, and ethically for future combat operations.

The working hypothesis is that all soldiers have human needs and most have spiritual needs broadly defined, and that converting these needs into strengths of will and character is an important part of combat leadership — and thus of Army professionalism itself. The chapter is composed of three major parts: (1) definition and discussion of human and spiritual needs, including an analysis of the theory of needs as applied to soldiers; (2) description of some of the past efforts to capitalize on human and spiritual needs so as to achieve confidence, cohesion, and courage; and (3) consideration of proposed combat training approaches as related to the human dimension of soldiers serving in the Army. Because certain aspects of human nature cannot be directly observed but must be inferred from observed behavior, the data for analysis rely on multidisciplinary sources which include the humanities as well as the social sciences.

### **Assumptions**

Since the subject matter of this analysis deals with the needs of the soldier, a review of sources relating to the individual will be useful before we move to the level of the organization or profession. Much of the research data involve individual responses from soldiers in small units rather than Army-wide studies. In taking this approach, we may assume first, that military leaders do and will recognize their dual obligations to complete their missions successfully and take effective measures to ensure the health and welfare of as many personnel as possible within their commands. This is an ancient canon of the military art, as explained by Sun Tzu in *The Art of War* in the early part of the fourth century B.C.:

And therefore the general who in advancing does not seek personal fame but whose only purpose is to protect the people and promote the best interests of his sovereign, is the precious jewel of the state. Because such a general regards his men as his own sons they will march with him into the deepest valleys. He treats them as his own beloved sons, and they will die with him. If he cherishes his men in this way, he will gain their utmost strength. Therefore The Military Code says: "The general must be the first in the toils and fatigues of the army."<sup>7</sup>

There are, of course, many other authoritative utterances regarding the commander's duty to care for soldiers, but few of such established antiquity. Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, perhaps the most authoritative contemporary guidance, states simply, "Accomplish the mission *and* take care of your soldiers."<sup>8</sup>

Our second assumption is that a holistic knowledge of the human and spiritual needs of soldiers, yet to be defined, will be of value to the military leader in providing support and resources for meeting these needs, thereby strengthening the capacity of the fighting force to complete its missions

successfully. In war, soldiers' comfort, insofar as comfort is possible, affects morale and thus combat effectiveness.<sup>9</sup> The Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer embraces this concept in its brief declaration that "all soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers, and I will always place their needs above my own."<sup>10</sup> Further, the new Soldier's Creed implicitly states that it is not solely the responsibility of officers and noncommissioned officers to be self-aware and adaptable, but rather that all soldiers will exemplify those traits. Gen. Creighton Abrams, former Army Chief of Staff, goes to the heart of the matter:

The Army is not made up of people; the Army is people. They have needs and interests and desires. They have spirit and will, strengths and abilities. They are the heart of our preparedness and this preparedness — as a nation and as an Army — depends upon the spirit of our soldiers. It is the spirit which gives the Army life. Without it we cannot succeed.<sup>11</sup>

If leadership means gaining the willing obedience of subordinates who understand and believe in the mission's purpose, who value their team and their place in it, who trust their leaders and have the will to see the mission through, then leaders must understand two key elements: leadership itself as well as the people they lead.<sup>12</sup>

### **Religion, Spirituality, and Human and Spiritual Needs**

Toward the end of his classic study of the psychology of soldiers, *The Anatomy of Courage* (1967), Lord Charles Moran turned to the subject of religion and spiritual power:

I have said nothing of religion, though at no time has it been far from my thoughts. General Paget asked me once to talk to officers commanding divisions and corps and armies in the Home Forces. When I had done, they broke up and came to me, one or two at a time, questioning. Often that night I was asked about the importance of religion. Speaking as if they did not know how to put it, they separately told me how faith had come into the lives of many of their men. Is it so strange? Is it not natural that they are fumbling for another way of living, less material, less sterile, than that which has brought them to this pass? What are they seeking?<sup>13</sup>

Lord Moran's questions are well posed, for the separate disciplines of psychology and religion often look to separate sources of authority, separate methodologies, and different language to describe human behavior. Nevertheless, many psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and physicians recognize the phenomenology of religion as abstracted from any claims concerning its essence. In other words, religion may be studied and respected as an element of culture without subscription to its content. W.I. Thomas, one of the leading sociologists of the past century, explained that "if a culture believes something to be real, we must respect that belief in dealing with that culture."<sup>14</sup> Recently the profession of arms has developed a growing interest in the pervasiveness of religious authority in traditional cultures and the necessity of understanding religion as a motivating force in many world communities.

Many soldiers in the American Army culture identify with a specific religious faith — some 299,958 or 64 percent of active duty soldiers in April 2001 — but many are also reluctant to define too closely what they mean by religion, faith, and especially spirituality.<sup>15</sup> Even though spiritual strength is mentioned in many Army publications, e.g., the 1999 edition of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's *TLS Strategy: Change, Readiness, and the Human Dimension of Training, Leader Development and Soldiers*, as well as the 2001 edition of the Department of the Army's Well-Being Campaign Plan, there are comparatively few definitions that have been published.<sup>16</sup>



Part of the reason why soldiers are reluctant to discuss religion openly is their perception that religion is a very personal subject. Two generations ago Prof. Morris Janowitz found “a tendency among leaders in a political democracy, and especially among the military, to resent being questioned about their religious background.”<sup>17</sup> A strong adherence to a particular religious point of view can be perceived as politically divisive and detrimental to unit cohesion. More commonly, religious language itself is not well understood, for the same terms may have different meanings in different faith groups. Military leaders like to have a clear idea of what they are saying and supporting, as do most people.

At the same time, many educational institutions, including the U. S. Military Academy, have recognized a spiritual domain in their philosophies of comprehensive education. The Cadet Leader Development System, a strategy for total commissioned leader development at West Point, links the spiritual domain to a common quest for meaning in life:

This [spiritual] domain explicitly recognizes that character is rooted in the very essence of who we are as individuals, and discerning “who we are” is a lifelong search for meaning. Cadet years are a time of yearning, a time to be hungry for personal meaning and to engage in a search for ultimate meaning in life. Formally recognizing this fundamental aspect of human development is not unique to West Point; educators have long held that individual moral search is an inherent, even vital, component of any robust undergraduate education. In other words, cadets’ search for meaning is natural, it will occur, whether or not we explicitly recognize and support it as an institution or not.<sup>18</sup>

For some, the quest for meaning will lead to questions of religion. For others, meaning is found through spirituality, a broader and possibly less distinct category than institutional religion. Is there a useful lexicon for such terms as religion, spirituality, identity, ultimate meaning, and self-actualization in individual development?

Dr. Jeff Levin, Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute for Healthcare Research and a scholar of the relationship between religious faith and health, tackles the problem of defining religion and spirituality as follows:

Historically, “religion” has denoted three things: particular churches or organized religious institutions; a scholarly field of study; and the domain of life that deals with things of the spirit and matters of “ultimate concern.” To talk of practicing religion or being religious refers to behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and so on, that involve this domain of life. This is so whether one takes part in organized activities of an established religious institution or one has an inner life of the spirit apart from organized religions.

“Spirituality,” as the term traditionally has been used, refers to a state of being that is acquired through religious devotion, piety, and observance. Attaining spirituality—union or connection with God or the divine—is the ultimate goal of religion, and is a state not everyone reaches. According to this usage, spirituality is a subset of a larger phenomenon, religion, and by definition is sought through religious participation.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Levin goes on to observe, however, that in the last 30 years the word “spirituality” has taken on a wider meaning. New Age authors and some news media have limited “religion” to those behaviors and beliefs that occur in the context of organized religious institutions. All other religious expression, particularly private meditation and secular transcendent experiences including feelings of awe in the presence of nature and oneness with it, are now encompassed by the term “spirituality.” This wider definition reverses the relationship between religion and spirituality to make the former now the subset of the latter.<sup>20</sup>

Many scholars of world religions agree that Levin's wider definition of spirituality seems to fit the beliefs of many faith groups, even those with non-theistic views. Although the majority of the world's religions do claim to be the vehicles for a personal experience with God, Allah, Brahman, or one of the other of the world's named deities, there are others for whom spirituality is a non-theistic pilgrimage to individual enlightenment, wisdom, and transcendence. For example, in Zen or Ch'an Buddhism, "the highest truth or first principle is inexpressible," that is, the divine is so remote from human perception as to make its essence indescribable, thereby rendering an organized, doctrinal religion impossible; however, a mind-expanding, experiential awakening called "satori" is still available through meditation, mentoring by masters, and self-discipline.<sup>21</sup> In the Shinto religion of Japan, the perception of "kami" may be simply the reverence one has for the awesome power and beauty of nature even though gifts are frequently left at Shinto shrines for the spirits that inhabit such places.<sup>22</sup> The spiritual goal of reaching Nirvana is found in both theistic Hinduism and non-theistic Theravada Buddhism. The Falun Gong meditation which began in China in 1992 consists of spiritual exercises to promote health, cure illnesses, and allow the practitioner to absorb energy from the universe in order to ascend to a higher plane of human existence, but there are no named deities.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, to summarize the period since the 1970s, the context of religious institutions and spiritual practices in America has become enormously more diverse. Although in 1998 approximately 90 percent of the American people professed to be religious and 63 percent (169 million) identified themselves as affiliated with a *specific* religious group, the number of separate religious denominations has grown in a sixty-year span from about 45 in 1940 to more than 2,000 at present.<sup>24</sup> These proliferations of religious and spiritual options suggest that Levin and others are correct to identify spirituality with the individual quest for greater insight, enlightenment, wisdom, meaning, and experience with the numinous or divine. Religion does refer in most current literature to the institutionalization of symbols, rites, practices, education, and other elements necessary to transmit the specifics of religious culture to the next generation.

However, there is no evidence that the world's major religions are in decline. Indeed, as Samuel Huntington has argued, there is a worldwide revival of interest in traditional faiths, including Christianity in Russia, Buddhism in Japan, and Islam in Central Asia, faiths which offer meaning, stability, identity, assurance, and fixed points of reference in the face of the "clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in a recent poll taken by Blum and Weprin Associates of New York, which surveyed adults across America, percent of those polled said that they were *both* religious and spiritual. Only 20 percent identified themselves as "only spiritual," and still fewer (9 percent) viewed religion in a negative way.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, with the phenomenal growth of communication technologies and availability of knowledge at the individual level, the spiritual quest by future generations may depend on some traditional religious institutions but will certainly be directed toward meeting broader individual needs. In a current study conducted from 29 November to 7 December 2003 for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Dr. Charles Moskos found that 26 percent of his study group of 500 soldiers stated that being deployed had a positive effect on their religious feelings.<sup>27</sup>

### **Theory of Human Needs Applied to Soldiers**

The psychological study of soldiers is a relatively new academic endeavor. In the preface to his book, *The Anatomy of Courage*, Lord Moran, who had served as a medical officer in France and Flanders during World War I, explained that "there was no book in the English language on the psychology of the soldier before 1945."<sup>28</sup> *The Anatomy of Courage* was designed to fill that gap. It was an attempt to answer questions about what was happening in men's minds during combat and how they overcame fear. Since 1967, when Moran's book was published, there have been numerous studies on military psychology,

military psychiatry, and combat motivation.<sup>29</sup> It was from an analysis of motivation and behavioral theory that the theory of needs as applied to soldiers found its most eloquent proponents.

The nature of the relationship between motivation and human behavior has been a subject of philosophical and psychological interest for centuries. There are multiple modern formulations which seek to explain motivation in general, including hedonistic, cognitive, drive reduction, and needs theories, to mention a few.<sup>30</sup> For more than 40 years, a theory popular in U.S. Army literature was Dr. Abraham Maslow's concept of *self-actualization* as the driving force of human personality, as set forth in his 1954 book *Motivation and Personality*.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Maslow was associated with the humanistic movement in psychology which emphasized the person and his or her psychological growth.<sup>32</sup> Maslow described self-actualization as the need "to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming," or, in other words, to be all one can be.<sup>33</sup>

According to Maslow's self-actualizing theory, the components of identity arise from two sources: the individual's unique potential and the different ways the individual copes with impediments placed in the way. Maslow identified human needs in three categories: 1) basic needs arranged in a hierarchy which included physical necessities, safety and security, and love and social belongingness, 2) esteem or recognition needs; and 3) metaneeds which included spiritual qualities such as order, unity, goodness and spirituality itself.<sup>34</sup> Basic needs are deficiency needs, necessary for functional survival, and must be fulfilled before a person can turn attention to the metaneeds. Esteem or recognition and metaneeds are growth needs; if properly satisfied, a person will grow into a completely developed human being—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—and have the potential to become a self-actualized person.<sup>35</sup>

Maslow recognized a spiritual component in the human personality, but argued that it was a natural component which sought meaning in a cause outside oneself and bigger than oneself, something impersonal, not merely self-centered.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the spiritual need impelled persons toward vocations, callings, and missions which they described with passionate, selfless, and profound feelings.<sup>37</sup>

Maslow believed that such metaneeds are universal, but that usually only self-actualized people attempted to meet them.

This is to say, that the most highly developed persons we know are metamotivated to a much higher degree, and are basic-need-motivated to a lesser degree than average or diminished people are. The full description of human nature must then include all intrinsic values. These intrinsic values are instinctoid in nature, i.e., they are needed to avoid illness and to achieve fullest humanness or growth. The highest values, the spiritual life, the highest aspirations of mankind are therefore proper subjects for scientific study and research.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, Maslow argued that the spiritual aspirations of the human personality are a natural phenomenon, not a theological construct nor limited to the domain of religious institutions. In his book *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (1970), Maslow explained, "I want to demonstrate that spiritual values have naturalistic meaning, that they are not the exclusive possession of organized churches, that they do not need supernatural concepts to validate them, that they are well within the jurisdiction of a suitably enlarged science, and that, therefore, they are the general responsibility of all mankind."<sup>39</sup>

The Army leadership adopted Maslow's theory of basic and metaneeds enthusiastically after 1970. This was because, in part, it correlated well with observable behavior among soldiers and because it was in consonance with the compelling analogies that if missions have requirements and weapons have a basic load, then soldiers must have human requirements and basic needs. In a collection of Bill Mauldin's World War II cartoons titled *Up Front*, G.I. Willie in his torn and dirty fatigues tells a medic, "Just gimme a coupla aspirin, I already got a Purple Heart."<sup>40</sup> Willie's basic needs, in Maslow's terms, clearly claimed priority over his esteem or recognition needs.

The October 1983 edition of Field Manual 22-100, *Military Leadership*, a standard text for thousands of the Army's leaders, incorporated Maslow's hierarchy of basic physical, safety, and social needs almost verbatim.<sup>41</sup> The manual's authors explained, "As a leader, you must understand these needs because they are powerful forces in motivating soldiers. To understand and motivate people and to develop a cohesive, disciplined, well-trained unit, you must understand human nature."<sup>42</sup>

However, there were three divergencies from Maslow's theory in the 1983 leadership manual. First, rather than discuss the need for esteem or recognition, which is the fourth need in Maslow's hierarchy, the leadership manual addressed "Higher Needs," i.e., the need for religion, the need for increased competence, and the need to serve a worthwhile cause. With regard to the need for religion, the manual's writers explained that historically,

many people not normally religious become so in time of war. The danger and chaos of war give rise to the human need to believe that a greater spiritual being is guiding one's fate for the best, regardless of whether one lives or dies. In this sense it helps soldiers to believe that they are fighting for a cause that is moral and right in the eyes of their religion. This is an important source of motivation for soldiers all over the world.<sup>43</sup>

Although the authors may have reflected their own beliefs accurately, Maslow argued that spiritual needs are universal, not dependent upon crises in war except perhaps as one of many catalysts for revealing such needs and not *always* leading to faith in a greater spiritual power so much as to a greater potential state of individual spirituality.

In more recent years, the Army has modified its language in describing the needs of soldiers and their families. Part of this change was due to advances in medical and behavioral research, notably by the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences and by the Academy of Health Sciences at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, among others. Nevertheless, human needs as embodied in the soldier are still represented in roughly the same hierarchy Maslow propounded. The Army Well-Being Strategic Plan of 2001 produced by the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel defined Army well-being as "the personal—physical, material, mental, and spiritual—state of soldiers [Active, Reserve, Guard, retirees, veterans], civilians, and their families that contributes to their preparedness to perform the Army's mission."<sup>44</sup> The spiritual state (of wellbeing), according to the Army Well-Being Plan, "centers on a person's religious/philosophical needs and may provide powerful support for values, morals, strength of character, and endurance in difficult and dangerous circumstances."<sup>45</sup>

In summary, contemporary psychologists have challenged Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which they describe as "one size fits all," instead pointing to a more complex model to explain motivation and behavior. Steven Reiss, a psychologist at Ohio State University, has identified at least 15 fundamental motivational desires in human beings, including honor, morality, and order. Reiss does not present "spirituality" as a category of human motivation and desire, but he does say that further categories are open to scientific study.<sup>46</sup>

Likewise, but from a different perspective, research in the relationship between spirituality and healing has increased dramatically in the past ten years. The National Institute for Healthcare Research in Rockville, Maryland, has accumulated more than 200 studies from researchers at such prestigious institutions as Harvard, Duke, Yale, Michigan, Berkeley, Rutgers, and the University of Texas at Galveston showing that religious beliefs and practices benefit health and rates of recovery from illness in many patients.<sup>47</sup> According to one study by Dr. Andrew Newberg, published in 2001 under the title *Why God Won't Go Away*, research on the human brain suggests that a particular area of the brain is activated by prayer and meditation, at least among the subjects involved in the research. This led some interpreters to claim that "the human brain is wired for God."<sup>48</sup>

Yet none of the studies discovered to date claims that *all* people are either spiritual or religious. Levin

and Maslow agreed, after 60 years of study between them, that while everyone has a range of needs, not everyone reaches an awareness of either innate or acquired spiritual needs even though Maslow believed that all human beings are potentially motivated by metaneeds to some degree.<sup>49</sup>

What can be demonstrated, and what may be of most import for the Army leadership and Army professionalism, is that the American culture, from which the military services draw support, puts a high premium on spirituality, organized religion, religious freedom, and the Constitutional right to the free exercise of religion, a right which both Congress and the Federal courts have applied to military as well as to civilian communities. The *Journal of Family Psychology* reported in 1999 that in America,

many individuals report that religion and spirituality are integral parts of their lives. As many as 95% of American adults express a belief in God, 84% believe God can be reached through prayer, and 86% state religion is important or very important to them. Surveys also suggest religion may play a significant role in many marriages. Religiousness, as reflected by church affiliation or attendance, emerged as a correlate of higher marital satisfaction in early, classic studies on marital adjustment. More recently, greater religiousness has been tied to higher marital satisfaction and adjustment in large, nationally representative samples.<sup>50</sup>

The rate of attendance at religious services at least once a month among a national random sample of 1,000 families, as reported by the *Journal of Family Psychology*, was 37 percent, with 25 percent of the same sample reporting attendance at religious services weekly or more than once a week.<sup>51</sup>

Among Army soldiers in 2001 the rate of identification with one of the seven larger religious faith groups in the Army—Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu—was 64 percent, one percentage point higher than the national average.<sup>52</sup> Although chapel attendance figures for soldiers and family members of all faiths in the Army worldwide were not available, the U.S. Army Forces Command reported 10,563 field and chapel worship services conducted in FY 2000 for active duty soldiers.<sup>53</sup> In addition, FORSCOM documented among chapel-supported functions 821 weddings, 611 funerals, 334 memorial services, 2,644 family skill/enhancement classes, and 1,304 separate suicide prevention classes which reached a total population of 89,979 soldiers, retirees, and family members. In a volunteer Army with 65 percent of its active force soldiers of all ranks married and with 52,000 physically handicapped members included in the families, these services were indispensable to soldier welfare and readiness.<sup>54</sup>

Since church attendance by the retiree population has not been separately tabulated, the estimated church attendance figures for active duty soldiers and family members cannot be accurately determined. However, of 12,561 waiting spouses during lengthy separations due to deployments, 30.6 percent (3,844) reported use of worship programs and services provided by Army chaplains.<sup>55</sup>

Although all relevant inputs have not been considered (e.g., religious activities in the Reserve components), it seems reasonable to conclude that the active duty Army population is a microcosm of American society and culture. The majority of citizens and soldiers profess to be religious. Moreover, many more people have an interest in spirituality and religion than attend religious services, at least on a regular basis. During periods of prolonged stress to both individuals and families as exemplified by deployment to a combat zone, most soldiers and spouses indicate that religion is an important support for their pre-deployment readiness, their morale, the well-being of their deploying units, the durability of their marriages, and the welfare of families back home.<sup>56</sup>

### **Leveraging the Human Dimension to Build Soldier Confidence, Cohesion and Courage**

*You must speak to the soul in order to electrify the man. — Napoleon Bonaparte*<sup>57</sup>

On 15 June 1941, Gen. George C. Marshall addressed the faculty and students of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, a college linked to the Episcopal Church, on the subject of morale in modern war:

I know that this association with you here this morning is good for my soul. If I were back in my office I would not have referred to my soul. Instead I should have used the word “morale” and said that this occasion increased my “morale”—in other words was of spiritual benefit to me. One of the most interesting and important phenomena of the last war was the emergence of that French word from comparative obscurity to widespread usage in all the armies of the world. Today as we strive to create a great new defensive force, we are investing the word “morale” with deeper and wider meaning. Underlying all the effort back of this essentially material and industrial effort is the realization that the primary instrument of warfare is the fighting man. We think of food in terms of morale—of clothing, of shelter, of medical care, of amusement and recreation in terms of morale. We want all of these to be available in such quantity and quality that they will be sustaining factors when it comes to a consideration of the soldier’s spirit. The soldier’s heart, the soldier’s spirit, the soldier’s soul are everything. Unless the soldier’s soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end.<sup>58</sup>

General Marshall gave a good deal of his personal attention to supporting the soldier’s morale, moral behavior, and spiritual strength, authorizing more than 550 cantonment chapels and 9,111 chaplains—one for every 1,200 soldiers—to the Army and Army Air Corps.<sup>59</sup>

However, General Marshall recognized that the soldier’s morale—or spirit—included much more and demanded much more than religious support alone. Morale is a disciplined state of mind which embraces confidence in the self and confidence in the unit. It encompasses courage, zeal, loyalty, hope, and at times grim determination to endure to the end.<sup>60</sup>

Morale, élan, esprit de corps, the will to fight, and the will to win are the human dimension’s most important intangible assets. Strong morale is an emotional bonding of purpose, common values, good leadership, shared hardship, and mutual respect.<sup>61</sup> Of all of the factors which produce strong morale in a unit—of whatever size—leadership by example and unit cohesion are frequently mentioned first.<sup>62</sup> Lord Moran’s experiences with unit cohesion in the British regiments during World War I led him to conclude that “there was only one religion in the regular army, the regiment; it seemed to draw out of them the best that was in them.”<sup>63</sup> Such morale, such fighting spirit, coupled with faith in their leaders, have been important factors in the survival and ultimate victory of soldiers throughout military history.

However, the morale of the soldier and the esprit de corps of the unit may have a short shelf life in extended combat. Like courage, morale is an expendable commodity and needs replenishment and support to withstand prolonged combat stress. John Keegan reflected on the experiences of British and American doctors during World War II in his book *The Face of Battle*. Of all British battle casualties during the active phase of the Battle of France in 1940, “ten to fifteen percent were psychiatric, ten to twenty percent during the first ten days of the Normandy battle and twenty percent during the two latter months, seven to ten percent in the Middle East in the middle of 1942, and eleven percent in the first two months of the Italian campaign.”<sup>64</sup> The official American report on combat exhaustion during the same period stated:

There is no such thing as “getting used to combat.” Each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of their exposure [thus] psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel

wounds in warfare. Most men were ineffective after 180 or even 140 days. The general consensus was that a man reached his peak of effectiveness in the first 90 days of combat, that after that his efficiency began to fall off, and that he became steadily less valuable thereafter until he was completely useless. The number of men on duty after 200 to 240 days of combat was small and their value to their units negligible.<sup>65</sup>

Not only individuals but also whole units became ineffective as a result of fatigue, stress, high casualties, poor leadership, and a loss of hope. In the Tunisian campaign of 1942, veteran American combat troops joined newer recruits in “going to ground,” “burning out,” and breaking down. One 1944 report pointed out that in the North African theater nearly all men in rifle battalions not otherwise disabled ultimately became psychiatric casualties even though some of them made it as far as Cassino and Anzio.<sup>66</sup> Other examples of whole units becoming combat ineffective may be gleaned from the experience of some German units on the Eastern Front, American units during the Korean War, and Iraqi units during the Gulf War.<sup>67</sup>

What types of support did soldiers find helpful in enduring and coping with the stresses of combat for as long as they did? John Keegan identifies four critical elements in British armies: (1) moral purpose—believing in the “rightness” of the war; (2) unit cohesion—formed in hard training, sports competitions, and rewards for being the “best”; (3) selfless leadership from first-line officers; and (4) spiritual or religious fortification before battle.<sup>68</sup>

William Manchester, who experienced intense fighting in the spring of 1945 as an enlisted Marine on Okinawa during World War II, wrote of his survival in his book *Goodbye Darkness*:

You had to know that your whole generation was in this together, that no strings were being pulled for anybody. You also needed nationalism, the absolute conviction that the United States was the envy of all other nations. Today the ascent of Sugar Loaf [on Okinawa] takes a few minutes. In 1945 it took ten days and cost 7,547 Marine casualties. And beneath my feet, where mud had been deeply veined with human blood, the healing mantle of turf [I murmured a prayer: *God*] *take away this murdering hate and give us thine own eternal love*. And then, in one of those great thundering jolts in which a man’s real motives are revealed to him, I understood why I jumped hospital and, in violation of orders, returned to the front and almost certain death. It was an act of love. Those men on the line were my family, my home. They were closer to me than I can say, closer than any friends had been or ever would be. They had never let me down, and I couldn’t do it to them. I had to be with them, rather than let them die and me live in the knowledge that I might have saved them. Men, I now know, do not fight for flag or country, for the Marine Corps or glory or any other abstraction. They fight for one another.<sup>69</sup>

If morale is the human dimension’s most important tangible asset, cohesion must be the most important single asset for a unit. Cohesion consists psychologically of recognition, stability, and safety.<sup>70</sup> Yet the coping strategies Keegan and Manchester identified, which included maintaining cohesion, did not exist as separate elements. For Manchester, combat was a spiritual exercise, a willingness to sacrifice for a greater cause (moral purpose) but mostly for his fellow Marines (brotherhood). Moral purpose, selflessness, courage, and spiritual strength as prescribed by Keegan and Manchester all contributed holistically to unit cohesion and survivability.

American surveys of other World War II combat survivors tended to center on similar coping mechanisms and their relative order of importance for survival of the individual. Although the methodologies involved in these surveys may be questioned, the general conclusions that spiritual strength and “not letting others down” were two of the most important motivations underlying endurance seem to

be validated by other observers, not the least of whom were senior officers.

In November 1945, the Research Branch in the Information and Education Division of the War Department queried a representative group of enlisted men who had returned from combat zones about their experiences in the U.S. Army during World War II.<sup>71</sup> There were few aspects of their experience that elicited positive responses. Most of the soldiers said they were “fed up” with the Army. When asked how they coped in combat, however, many responded that loyalty to one another and prayers for strength were important supports.<sup>72</sup>

In a survey of 1,433 enlisted infantrymen taken in Italy in April of 1945, 84 percent of the privates and 88 percent of the noncommissioned officers said that prayer helped them more “when the going got tough” than unit cohesion, the cause they were fighting for, thoughts of finishing the job to get home again, or thoughts of hatred for the enemy.<sup>73</sup> Among company grade infantry officers questioned in the European and Pacific theaters in the spring of 1944, approximately 60 percent said that prayer helped them significantly in tough circumstances.<sup>74</sup> Thus, in both Italy and in the Pacific, at different times, prayer as an aid to combat adjustment generally ranked higher among enlisted men than did the other personal coping mechanisms listed in the questionnaires. While officers reported being helped primarily by the desire not to let others down, even with them prayer ranked second.<sup>75</sup>

Among very senior officers who expressed religious faith, prayer seemed to be important to remind themselves and their soldiers of their dependence upon a Higher Power, to help senior leaders make decisions calmly, and to help them bear the burdens of their immense responsibilities. Lt. Gen. George Patton recognized the power of spiritual petition when he circulated 250,000 copies of a weather prayer, one for every soldier in the Third Army, during his efforts to relieve Bastogne in December of 1944.<sup>76</sup> President Dwight Eisenhower, in recalling his prayerful decision to launch the Normandy invasion in 1944, reflected that “prayer gives you the courage to make the decisions you must make in a crisis and then the confidence to leave the result to a Higher Power.”<sup>77</sup> General of the Army Douglas MacArthur told the cadets at West Point in his “Duty, Honor, Country” address of May 1962:

The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice. In battle, and, in the face of danger and death, he discloses those divine attributes which his Maker gave when He created man in His own image. No physical courage and no greater strength can take the place of the divine help which alone can sustain him.<sup>78</sup>

In the World War II surveys of combat veterans, prayer was not of itself a sufficient indicator of religious faith; it may have been adopted as an instrument of psychological self-defense. There were no data that could prove a relationship specifically between prayer in battle and formal religion. However, the experience of combat did seem to have an effect on spiritual attitudes, for 79 percent of combat veterans surveyed in both theaters believed that their Army experience had increased their faith in God.<sup>79</sup> As Lt. Gen. A.A. Vandegrift, Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, reflected on his experiences at Guadalcanal:

The percentage of men who devoted much time to religion might not make a very impressive showing. The average marine, or soldier, or sailor, is not demonstrative about his religion, any more than he is about his patriotism. But I do sincerely believe one thing: every man on Guadalcanal came to sense a Power above himself. There was a reality there greater than any human force. It is literally true—there are no atheists in foxholes — religion is precious under fire.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, from the commander’s point of view, the soldier’s spirit, his or her morale, is not exactly coterminous with the soldier’s personal views on, or experience with, religion. The fighting spirit of the soldier may be motivated by any emotion, idea, or complex of ideas that will inspire the soldier to



accomplish the mission. These compelling drives may include personal confidence, competence, and pride in self, faith in leaders, unit bonding and cohesion, a belief in the moral necessity and rightness of the cause, a consonance between personal values and national purpose, and a belief that others are depending upon the soldier for success. As the reality of danger increases, however, and as casualties pile up, religion seems to provide many soldiers a strong buttress for the spirit and will to endure.

Historically, therefore, religious support for the soldier's spirit has been an important source of strength for many in coping with difficult and dangerous situations, especially over prolonged periods of time. Religious services before battle and the presence of chaplains in the lines, at aid stations, and even in POW camps have helped thousands of soldiers face the uncertainties of war.

For example, during Operation Desert Shield, from August through December 1990, 18,474 soldiers from the XVIII Airborne Corps attended voluntary religious services. The U.S. Army Central Command sponsored 7,946 religious meetings with an attendance of 341,344 soldiers. Maj. Gen. Barry McCaffrey remarked that "we had the most religious Army since the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War."<sup>81</sup> Moskos in his study on Operation Iraqi Freedom found that 33 percent of active component and more than 50 percent of reserve component soldiers attended a religious service conducted by a chaplain.<sup>82</sup>

At midnight on 17 January 1991, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf held a staff meeting with 30 generals and colonels in his war room in Riyadh to read his announcement of the beginning of combat operations. In his message General Schwarzkopf reminded his staff of their purpose, their just cause, and his total confidence in them. He then asked his chaplain to offer a prayer. The chaplain reflected later that even though it was not discussed as such, the prayer for a quick and decisive victory with few casualties had a unifying, cohesive effect on the staff as they set about the business of war.<sup>83</sup>

In the discussion of spiritual fitness for soldiers in the Army's Health Promotion Program, the term is defined as "the development of those personal qualities needed to sustain a person in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy."<sup>84</sup> No matter how pluralistic the sources for spiritual fitness may be, in the estimation of many senior leaders the ability of the soldier to draw on his or her own spiritual or philosophical resources in times of stress is an undeniable component of readiness. Gen. Gordon Sullivan, former Chief of Staff of the Army, noted a relationship between courage and the spiritual fitness of soldiers in Field Manual 100-1, *The Army*, published in December 1991:

Courage is the ability to overcome fear and carry on with the mission. Courage makes it possible for soldiers to fight and win. Courage, however, transcends the physical dimension. Moral and spiritual courage are equally important. There is an aspect of courage which comes from a deep spiritual faith which, when prevalent in an Army unit, can result in uncommon toughness and tenacity in combat.<sup>85</sup>

Gen. John Hendrix, a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and former Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command, stated at a Memorial Day Prayer Breakfast at Ft. McPherson, Georgia, on 22 May 2001:

Spirituality is an individual matter. We must not cross the line between church and state. But in general spiritual fitness is important to any organization. Spiritual fitness helps shape and mold our character. Spiritual fitness provides each of us with the personal qualities which enable us to withstand difficulties and hardship. When properly exercised, spiritual fitness enhances individual pride in our unit.<sup>86</sup>

Gen. George C. Marshall's comments on the subject to Army chaplains in 1944 in Washington, DC, reinforce the message: "True, physical weapons are indispensable, but in the final analysis it is the human spirit, the spiritual balance, the religious fervor, that wins the victory. It is not enough to fight. . . . It is the

spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything."<sup>87</sup>

### **Training Considerations: Preparing Soldiers for Future Combat**

Two essential ingredients for success in combat — that is, for creating high morale, unit cohesion, bonding among soldiers, increased personal courage, spiritual strength, and determination to succeed — are inspirational leadership and tough, realistic training.<sup>88</sup> The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study states that the Combat Training Centers must “recapitalize, modernize, staff, and resource to provide multi-echelon, combined arms operational and leader development experience in all types of environments, across the full spectrum of conflict.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore we shall glance briefly at the characteristics of the contemporary operating environment and the leadership skills soldiers must possess to prevail. Then, as part of the human dimension, we shall turn to a generalized description of the millennial generation, those Americans born in 1982 and after, from whose ranks the Army will recruit its future force. Finally, we will examine two incidents that occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom and their implications for training in the Army.

### **Battlefield Visualization and Soldier Skills**

Army literature on battlefields of the future is complex and copious. For several years at the U.S. Army War College and at the U.S. Army Command and Staff College, among other institutions, numerous subject-matter experts prepared briefings, training models, and articles on the Army After Next, on the digitized battlefield, and on Army transformation into a true 21st century fighting force. The purpose of these studies was to prepare the military for future wars and to tailor the reduced forces available to meet changing, possibly asymmetric, threats with a multi-dimensional national military strategy. A former deputy commander, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, visualizes the future battlefield as follows:

Battlespace—the use of the entire battlefield and the space around it to apply combat power to overwhelm the enemy—includes not only the physical volume of breadth, depth, and height, but also the operational dimensions of time, tempo, depth, and synchronization. Commanders must integrate other service, nation, and agency assets with their own to apply their effects toward a common purpose. The digitized battle staff—a deputy commander and three planning and operations teams—is one concept to help the commander handle the current battle, the future battle, and sequels to the future battle with an information exchange system that produces virtual collocation between staff and external elements. Emerging technology includes interactive graphics, enemy and friendly force tracking, scalable map displays, three-dimensional terrain visualization, course-of-action analysis, and video-teleconferencing capabilities among other assets.<sup>90</sup>

At the operational and tactical levels, this means that soldiers will have to be proficient not only with their weapon systems, but also with emerging technologies which would function in all shades of weather, terrain, and illumination. Moreover, dispersal of units, to prevent detection by an enemy with over-the-horizon targeting capabilities, will produce a force with mobile combat power and logistical support as opposed to the iron mountains of stockpiled equipment familiar on Vietnam-era firebases or on forward-deployed Desert Storm logistical bases.

The specific geography for future engagements is, of course, speculative. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century American soldiers have fought in foreign areas on snow-bound tundra and sandy beaches, and in forests, mountains, deserts, jungles, and urban areas. For the future, all of these settings must be considered along with the

special problems of homeland defense amidst one's own citizens.

Responding to current after action reviews of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, as well as the post-11 September ethos, the Department of Defense and the Army in particular have reevaluated their doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities with a view toward accelerating the transformation to a new Army. This transformation is rooted in an understanding that the contemporary operational environment is not static and predictable, but in fact fluid, unpredictable, nonlinear and asymmetrical. We are an Army at war, and the very culture must change. As Brig. Gen. David A. Fastabend wrote in *Army Magazine*, "We must be prepared to question everything. Development of a culture of innovation will not be advanced by panels or studies. Cultural change begins with behavior and the leaders who shape it. We have the mindset and culture that will sustain the Army as ready and relevant, now and into the future."<sup>91</sup>

What, then, are the special skills soldiers of the future must possess? In the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's strategy for dealing with change, readiness, and the human dimension, some of these qualities are described:

First, the leveraging of the human dimension is all about leading change with quality people, grounded on Army values, and inspired by an American warrior ethos. Adaptive leadership remains an essential aspect. Quality people will need to have the character and interpersonal skills to rapidly integrate individuals and groups of individuals into tailored organizations. They will need to adapt quickly to new situations, and form cohesive teams, and demonstrate competence and confidence operating in complex and ambiguous environments.<sup>92</sup>

In short, the Army will need not just soldiers but soldier-leaders who are committed to the professional ethic, who are talented in small-group facilitation, who are flexible and mentally agile, and who can integrate technological and interpersonal skills in the midst of uncertain and possibly chaotic combat conditions. The metacompetencies of self-awareness and adaptability are being channeled to change the Army culture into what has been coined a "Culture of Innovation." As Gen. Kevin Byrnes wrote, "We need to create a culture of thinkers and innovators who look at a challenge and input a set of ways of doing it, not just apply band-aids and bailing wire to fix old ways of doing business. If something needs to be changed and it makes sense to me, let's figure out the best way to do it."<sup>93</sup>

Gen. George Casey in his opening statement to the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee stated that "the Army's training programs have also been, and will continue to be, the cultural drivers for the future. Leaders will not learn what to think, but instead how to think — jointly, strategically and within the context of an expeditionary mindset."<sup>94</sup> This paradigm shift is major in the transformation of how and what the Army will train. It influences not only the officer education system but also basic combat training and all NCO Schools. In consonance with the lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq, every soldier must know how to make decisions independently, if necessary, to accomplish the mission.

Concerning the human dimension, John Miller and Kurt Reitingger have observed:

Command of soldiers is, first and foremost, a human endeavor requiring the commander to be a decision-maker and leader. As is the case today, these competent commanders will establish their moral authority by tough, demanding training to standard and by the caring, holistic preparation of their subordinate leaders, soldiers, and units for mission operations. The significance of the bonds of trust and confidence between the leader and the led will grow as the potential for decentralized execution over larger battlespace increases.<sup>95</sup>

Clearly, then, with the current rate of deployments and missions, the Army's recruiting and leadership challenges are daunting. We no longer have the leisure to complete complex and lengthy training before units find themselves engaged in combat operations. In the long history of the Army, however, this has often been the case.

### **The Millennials: What Soldiers for the Future?**

Drawing upon approximately 210 national surveys, interviews, and studies of American young people, Neil Howe and William Strauss have formed a description of a group they call the Millennials. These are American young people born in 1982 or later; in other words, they were 18 or younger in the year 2000. Some of the characteristics of these young people will be of interest to Army recruiters.

First, they are a large group of approximately 76 million, with 90 percent native born and about 10 percent who immigrated to the United States.<sup>96</sup> By the year 2002 they will outnumber the surviving Baby Boomers. They are the most diverse group ethnically in American history, with 36 percent nonwhite or Latinos in the 1999 youth population.<sup>97</sup> At least one Millennial in five has one immigrant parent, making the Millennials potentially the largest second-generation immigrant group in U.S. history. As the authors point out, their presence will contribute to the irreversible diversification of America.<sup>98</sup>

In terms of religious identity, approximately 20 million are Roman Catholic, which helps account for the growth of the Roman Catholic constituency in the United States from 26.6 percent of the U.S. Christian population in 1958 (30.6 million) to 38.3 percent in 1998 (61.2 million). That is an increase of 30 million American Roman Catholics in 40 years, making the Roman Catholic Church in America four times the size of the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination.<sup>99</sup>

For many Millennials there is no separation of church and state in their primary education. Two million attend Catholic elementary schools and another two million attend Catholic high schools. Nine in ten private schools in the United States in 2000 had at least a nominal religious affiliation, many with their own mandatory chapel programs. Within the public schools there were no prayer clubs or circles in 1990; now, with the 1995 Federal court ruling that students had a right to organized prayer gatherings as long as they were not official school programs, there are more than 10,000 of them.<sup>100</sup>

Among the Millennials who are over 14, some 65 percent plan on attending college, while 55 percent go to church regularly as opposed to 45 percent of Americans as a whole.<sup>101</sup> The ones in high school are bright. They have scored well in science and reading as compared with students from other industrialized countries.<sup>102</sup>

These figures appear even more impressive in light of the report that one-fourth to one-third of all Millennials lives in single-parent families. More than half of these single parents are living with partners to whom they are not married.<sup>103</sup> It may not be surprising, then, that about 48 percent of Millennials have been sexually active as teenagers.<sup>104</sup> The *Chronicle of Higher Education* has reported that, in order to meet the psychological needs of many of these families, there has occurred an increase in "the spiritual dimensions" of social work. Edward Canda, a professor of social work at the University of Kansas, noted that "in a crisis or occasion of grief and loss, there is often a shaking of the foundation of one's sense of meaning, who one is, what life is about, and what reality is about. We cannot escape these questions. It would be malpractice to avoid them."<sup>105</sup>

Significantly, the war in Kosovo is the only U.S. military action that most Millennials remember. The oldest young people in this sample were only eight to nine years old during the Gulf War, and the events surrounding the subsequent Oklahoma City Federal building bombing and the Columbine school shootings made greater impressions.<sup>106</sup>

Other sources, outside the studies surveyed by Howe and Strauss, paint a somewhat different picture. The State School Superintendent's Office for the state of Georgia reported on 5 May 2001 that of the

116,000 high school freshmen who were enrolled in 1997, only 72,000 graduated in June of 2000. This reflected a high school dropout rate of 38 percent.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, 47 percent of Georgia's high school seniors who graduated in the class of 1999 were unable to keep their scholarships as college sophomores because they could not maintain a B average.<sup>108</sup> Finally, United Way reported on 13 May 2001 that there were 230,000 troubled children under some form of care in the state of Georgia—all Millennials under the age of 18. If one assumes that Georgia, with half of its eight million people living in Atlanta, is not too different from many other states, one suspects that the rosy reports by Howe and Strauss were based on the most privileged of the Millennials.

One trait that has not been questioned, however, is the growing interest among older young adults in discovering their own interests, vocations, and, in some cases, spiritual insights. Many college students and young business people want to be part of an organization or movement which transcends the ordinary. The Campus Crusade for Christ, for example, has experienced an amazing growth in the past five years among college students looking for meaning in their lives. Campus Crusade has 1,000 college chapters—including one at Harvard—comprising a total of roughly 40,000 students. Donations to Campus Crusade, as reported by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, exceeded \$450 million in the year 2000. “They’re bombarded and blasted with all kinds of atheistic teaching from the classroom and they need help,” according to William Bright, the lay founder of the movement.<sup>109</sup>

In his recent book, *Capturing the Heart of Leadership*, Prof. Gilbert Fairholm of Hampden-Sydney College describes a similar kind of restlessness among young workers:

Whether we like it or not, work is becoming or has become a prime source of values in our society and our personal lives. American workers are uncomfortable, uncommitted, and adrift. They are searching for new organizational patterns and new paradigms. Integrating the many components of one’s work and personal life into a comprehensive system for managing the workplace defines the holistic or spiritual approach. It provides the platform for leadership that recognizes this spiritual element in people and in all of their behavior.<sup>110</sup>

Fairholm argues that young people expect leadership to be a relationship, not just a skill or personal attribute. Leaders are leaders only so far as they develop relationships with their followers, relationships that help all concerned to achieve their spiritual as well as economic and social fulfillment.<sup>111</sup> This concept is not far from the Army’s definition of the transformational leadership style and may be a constructive bridge in thinking about what “leadership” might mean to the next generation of American soldiers.<sup>112</sup>

### **Implications for Combat Training**

*War, the most dramatically physical of all human works, does indeed become the vehicle for the most spiritual of achievements. And the morale springing from such philosophy may be counted on to win the wars. — William E. Hocking<sup>113</sup>*

Two events that occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom provide important implications for training in combat.<sup>114</sup> They underscore the belief that the metacompetencies of self-awareness and adaptability should be fully integrated not only with the warrior ethos, but also at all levels of leadership training.

After two days of heavy combat operations on the outskirts of Najaf, the Division Commander of the 101st, Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, told his staff, “It is time to stop dipping around the edges and jump in the pool. Tomorrow the 2-327th Battalion and its sister units will push deeper into the city

and possibly determine once and for all who owns it.”<sup>115</sup>

On 3 April 2003 the soldiers of the 2-237 Infantry moved into the city, the home of one of Iraq’s leading holy men, the Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein Sistani, in order to gain his crucial support for their mission in An Najaf. Turning the corner, a group of men blocked their way shouting in Arabic, “God is Great.” The crowd grew into the hundreds, many of whom mistakenly thought the Americans were trying to capture the Grand Ayatollah and attack the Imam Ali Mosque, a holy site revered by Shiite Muslims around the world.<sup>116</sup> Someone in the crowd lobbed a rock at the troops, then another. Lt. Col. Christopher Hughes, the battalion commander, was hit on the head, chest and the rim of his sunglasses with rocks.

Hughes subscribed to the philosophy of Sun Tzu: “A great commander is one who does not wield a weapon.” It followed that the best way to defuse the impending confrontation was to demonstrate peaceful intent. Hughes ordered his troops to “Take a knee and point your weapons to the ground, smile, and show no hostilities.” Some of the Iraqis then backed off and sat down, which enabled Hughes to look for the troublemakers in the crowd. He identified eight. Wanting it to be clear who started the shooting if it erupted, he told his soldiers, “We’re going to withdraw out of this situation and let them defuse it themselves.”

Hughes had trained his troops previously in understanding cultural differences and in the meaning and value of restraint. With his own rifle pointed toward the ground, he bowed to the crowd and turned away. Hughes and his infantry marched back to their compound in silence. When tempers had calmed, the Grand Ayatollah Sistani issued a fatwa (decree) calling on the people of Najaf to welcome Hughes’s soldiers.

The second event occurred on 20 August 2003 when Lt. Col. Allen B. West, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, took a prisoner out of the detention center near the Taji air base and threatened to kill him. The prisoner was an Iraqi policeman who, according to informants, was involved in the attack of 16 August at Saba al Boor near Tikrit.

West commented in an email interview with the *Washington Times* that he had “asked for soldiers to accompany him and told them we had to gather information and that it could get ugly,” for some soldiers had already assaulted the prisoner. After other interrogation techniques failed to secure the prisoner’s cooperation, West brandished his pistol. “I did use my 9 mm weapon to threaten him and fired it twice. Once I fired it into the weapons clearing barrel outside the facility alone, and the next time I did it with his head close to the barrel. I fired away from him. I stood between the pistol and his person. I admit that what I did was not right, but it was done with the concern of the safety of my soldiers and myself.”<sup>117</sup> After the shots were fired, the Iraqi policeman provided the information West wanted on a planned ambush near Saba. The Army, however, subsequently charged West with criminal assault for improper coercion of a prisoner.

Both commanders had the well being of their soldiers as a paramount concern. However, their actions were different. Hughes stated in his interview that but for the psychological operations and civil affairs personnel, the chaplain and the translators who taught me the cultural and religious implications, I would not have been as successful.”<sup>118</sup> Facing a different but no less difficult problem, West was equally successful, but his coercive methods ended his career.<sup>119</sup>

In war and in combat the metacompetencies of self-awareness and adaptability are critical. The Army Training and Leadership Development Panel Officer Study define these metacompetencies in the following manner: “Self-awareness is the ability to understand how to assess abilities, know strengths and weaknesses in the operational environment, and learn how to correct those weaknesses. Adaptability is the ability to recognize changes to the environment; assess that environment to determine what is new and what must be learned to be effective, all to standard and with

feedback.”<sup>120</sup> It is important to note there is no warrant for doing anything that is illegal, or morally or ethically unsound in either FM 22-100 or in the ATLDP Officer Study.

During the preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom there were many chaplains involved in both the ethical and spiritual training of units. Twenty of the Army’s training centers had chaplain instructors who were charged explicitly not to preach in the classroom, but to discuss professional values, ethics, and leadership. In field units, chaplains focused on “spiritual fitness training, or battle proofing,” a command program to address, among other topics, the full spectrum of moral concerns involving the profession of arms, the conduct of war, and personal spiritual care. Chaplains were their commanders’ staff officers of choice to be responsible for conducting these programs.

Spiritual fitness training by chaplains is part of unit preparation for deployment to combat zones. The chaplains could answer questions about morals and morale, they had connections to family support systems back home, they enjoyed legal confidentiality so that soldiers could report to them suspected violations of the law of war without fear of recrimination, and they could address the soldier’s personal spiritual needs and ethical questions. Although not all chaplains were fully trained in the ethics of war, they helped religious soldiers find the bridge between their spiritual and professional values in a way no other staff officer could be expected to do.

The question that must be asked regarding our innovative Army is how to develop leaders who know how to think, who have internalized the Army values and the warrior ethos, and who are flexible, adaptive, confident, competent and self-aware. This task is an ambitious one, for it requires leaders who can control their emotions and be able to analyze situations on the fly in order to make the right decision at the right time.

The focal shift in the Army’s leadership development with all the complexities of the post-11 September environment will continue to be a challenge. The implication of confronting enemies whose numbers include stateless terrorists with preemptive strikes and covert operations may tempt leaders, and therefore their subordinates, to disregard the Law of Land Warfare and the Geneva Conventions as outdated and irrelevant. A philosophy of ends justifying means can become the modus operandi for cruel and unusual interrogation techniques, not to mention questionable strategic operations and plans. However, if soldiers truly embrace and live the current Army Values and the Warrior Ethos, they will be fully equipped with the moral and the ethical decision matrices that will prevent them from succumbing to bestial acts of war. Leaders of all ranks must remember that their actions reflect not only upon them, but also upon the nation they have sworn to defend. The American people are eager to praise principled leaders, but will not tolerate military actions that violate their own values. The challenge that we face in the Army is to find the means to help soldiers make the right moral and ethical decisions in the presence of their enemies even when they are isolated from fellow soldiers.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the literature available on the human and spiritual needs of soldiers and how they may be trained for combat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The working hypothesis, that all soldiers have human needs and most have spiritual needs broadly defined, seems to be supported from a wide variety of sources in a number of fields. As Karl von Clausewitz tellingly observed in his treatise *On War*: “All effects in the sphere of mind and spirit have been proven by experience: they recur constantly and must receive their due as objective factors. What value would any theory of war have that ignored them.”<sup>121</sup> There also seems no question whether the Army Profession should continue to try to address these needs in the future as part of its leadership doctrine. Indeed, the unique aspects of the profession of arms in requiring the total commitment and

unlimited liability of soldiers deployed often in difficult and dangerous situations would seem to mandate such care and concern. Moreover, the Constitution, Congress, and the American people expect and demand it.

A corollary question is to what extent the profession of arms should try to meet the spiritual needs of a military population becoming ever more ethnically, morally, and religiously diverse. At the present time, the Army seems to have struck an appropriate balance between facilitating the free exercise of religion and in protecting the freedom of individual conscience for soldiers and their family members. Most religious services and ceremonies are voluntary. The Army Chaplain Corps, in implementing commanders' religious support programs, currently represents more than 140 different denominations and faith groups in its own ranks. There is no prospect that the Army will institutionalize a single religion, nor should it. There is a concern, however, as a shortage of young ordained clergy grows in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant communities nationally, that there will be a corresponding shortage of chaplains for the Army. Part of a solution could lie in the way the Millennial generation chooses to respond to its own spiritual challenges in the 21st century.

The preparation of soldiers for future combat seems to involve more knowledge, more technological skill, and perhaps more maturity on the part of junior leaders than has been the case in the past. Yet the basic principles involved in building relationships, unit cohesion, confidence, and courage have not changed very much over the years and will likely not change markedly in the near future.

There are valid, practical considerations for commanders, staff officers, senior noncommissioned officers, chaplains, surgeons, psychiatrists, and other leaders in preparing soldiers for combat. Some of the more important of these, based on historical experience and analysis, may be summed up as follows:

- Soldiers need to have time to get their personal affairs in order. This may include time for family, and legal as well as physical, mental, and spiritual preparation.
- Soldiers and family members need to have the most accurate and most current information possible on what they may expect. The importance, necessity, and moral justification of the mission are essential elements of information for the soldiers, their families, and communities if the unqualified support of all affected parties is to be forthcoming.
- Soldiers must be briefed on the cultures they will encounter in the area of operations and be thoroughly familiar with Army values, the Rules of Engagement, the Law of Land Warfare, and the Geneva Conventions.
- Commanders and other leaders need to spend some personal time with soldiers in their primary units to reinforce relationships, cohesion, confidence, and courage. Soldiers must know the commander's intent and their specific jobs to include how they fit into the total effort of the unit.
- Soldiers must be challenged by tough, realistic training and have confidence in their leaders, training, equipment, battle plans, teamwork, and ultimate chance for success. They must know and trust one another.
- Rituals before deployment and before battle based on unit history, esprit de corps, and spiritual preparation are important. These should include voluntary opportunities for religious sacraments, services, or meditation.
- Soldiers need to know that their commanders, senior NCOs, chaplains, and other key personnel are present at every stage during combat operations. The soldiers' morale is



strengthened if the total team is demonstrably present and involved.<sup>122</sup>

One caveat: War is not a thing which can be seen; it must be thought.<sup>123</sup> No one has ever seen war in all of its dimensions—physical, moral, and spiritual—because each participant sees the event from his or her own narrow, partial perspective. In the distant future, war and the professional skills needed to survive and prevail may be very different with the advent of robotics, information warfare, and even space technologies. Therefore the combat training strategies developed for the first decades of the 21st century may be of short duration, but they will also surely be important for their insights and wisdom in the evolution of future training doctrine and for appreciating the human dimension in Army professionalism.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The views and opinions expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or any other U.S. government entity. For assistance in researching and writing this chapter in 2004, the authors were indebted to Chaplain (COL) Richard Kuhlbars, Director of Combat Developments, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, and to Chaplain (Colonel) James Daniels, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup>S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (New York: William Morrow Co., 1947), 208, 211.

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup>Don M. Snider and Gale L. Watkins, “The Future of Army Professionalism: A Need for Renewal and Redefinition,” *Parameters* 30, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 17.

<sup>5</sup>Richard A. Gabriel, *To Serve with Honor: A Treatise on Military Ethics and the Way of the Soldier* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 5-6. Gabriel outlines many of the same handicaps during the Army’s shift to the All-Volunteer Force 30 years ago.

<sup>6</sup>Attributed to Gen. Robert E. Lee by Douglas S. Freeman as cited in Ken Burns, “The Civil War,” PBS video production, 1990, part V.

<sup>7</sup>*Sun Tzu: The Art of War*; trans. Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 128.

<sup>8</sup>FM 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 August 1999), 3-3.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-1.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-1 and 3-2.

<sup>13</sup>Lord Charles Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 202.

<sup>14</sup>Interview in Atlanta, Georgia, with James Eric Pierce, former Associate Professor of the Sociology of Religion at Pfeiffer College, on April 6, 2001.

<sup>15</sup>Data furnished by Chaplain Michael T. Bradfield, DA Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Washington, DC, 25 April 2001. This is actually a low figure because the 64% of active duty soldiers who profess a specific faith does not count those who belong to faith groups other than the seven largest by population, i.e., Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu.

<sup>16</sup>Task Force TLS, *Training, Leader Development and Soldiers Strategy* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1 October 1999), 75 and slides 14, 17; Lt. Col. Steven W. Shively, Project Officer, DA-ODCSPER, Directorate of Human Resources, *Draft Army Well-Being Campaign Plan*, 5 January 2001, 2.

<sup>17</sup>Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: The Free Press, 1960), 97.

<sup>18</sup>United States Military Academy, Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis, “Cadet Leader Development System,” Draft, July 2001, chapter 3, 3.

<sup>19</sup>Jeff Levin, *God, Faith and Health* (New York: John Wiley, 2001), 9-10. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 10; also see David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, trans., *Soren Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 495, for Kierkegaard’s condemnation of “faithless religiousness.”

<sup>21</sup>Robert D. Baird and Alfred Bloom, *Indian and Far Eastern Religious Traditions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 214; and Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 149.

<sup>22</sup>Geoffrey Parrinder, *World Religions: From Ancient History to the Present* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1985), 355.

<sup>23</sup>Saeed Ahmed, “Falun Gong: Peace of Mind,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 19 May 2001, B-1.

<sup>24</sup>John W. Wright, ed., *New York Times Almanac 2000* (New York: The Penguin Group, 1999), 414; Levin, 20; and Ron Feinberg, “Amen Corner,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 5 May 2001, B-1. This 63% may also be a low figure. The World Christian Encyclopedia published in 2001 reported 192 million Christians in the United States, 32 million more than *The New York Times Almanac* reported in 1998. The difference may be in counting numbers reported by independent congregational churches as opposed

to counting only figures from major denominations. See Ron Feinberg, "Report: Christianity Still Largest Religion," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 20 January 2001, B-1.

<sup>23</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 95-97.

<sup>26</sup>A survey of 502 adults from across the country with a 4.5% margin of error as reported in *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 12 May 2001, B-1.

<sup>27</sup>Charles Moskos and Laura Miller, *December 2003 Sociological Survey on Operation Iraqi Freedom Results, April 2004*, c-moskos@northwestern.edu, 5.

<sup>28</sup>Lord Moran, ix. Lord Moran must not have been as familiar with American sources as with British ones, for Yale University Press published William E. Hocking's *Morale and Its Enemies* in 1918.

<sup>29</sup>See, e.g., V.V. Shelyag et al., eds., *Military Psychology: A Soviet View* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972); Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Psychiatry: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); and Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle* (London: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing Co., 1982).

<sup>30</sup>Robert W. Swezey, Andrew L. Meltzer, and Eduardo Salas, "Some Issues Involved in Motivating Teams," in *Motivation: Theory and Research*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil, Jr., and Michael Drillings (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 141; and Josh R. Gerow, *Psychology: An Introduction* (New York: Longman Publishers, 1997), 360.

<sup>31</sup>Gardner Lindzey et al., *Psychology* (New York: Worth Publishers, 1978), 481.

<sup>32</sup>Gerow, 360.

<sup>33</sup>Lindzey, 481.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Metamotivation," in *The Healthy Personality*, eds. Hung-Min Chiang and Abraham H. Maslow (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1969), 29.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>39</sup>Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970), 4.

<sup>40</sup>Bill Mauldin, *Up Front* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 133.

<sup>41</sup>FM 22-100, *Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1983), 144-145.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 135, 144.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>44</sup>Shively, 2.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>46</sup>Interview with Chaplain (Major) Daniel Wackerhagen, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Ft. Jackson, SC, 15 May 2001; Steven Reiss, "Toward a Comprehensive Assessment of Fundamental Motivation," *Journal of Psychological Assessment* 10, no.2 (June 1998): 97-106.

<sup>47</sup>Interview with Dr. Thomas R. Smith, Executive Director for the National Institute for Healthcare Research, Rockville, MD, 4 May 2001; see also Levin, 3-6; and Phyllis McIntosh, "Faith is Powerful Medicine," *Reader's Digest*, October 1999, 151-155.

<sup>48</sup>Quoted from a discussion with Col. Eric B. Schoomaker, M.D., former FORSCOM Surgeon and currently Commander of the 30th Medical Brigade in Germany, 11 May 2001.

<sup>49</sup>Levin, 9; Maslow, *The Healthy Personality*, 35.

<sup>50</sup>Annette Mahoney et al., "Marriage and the Spiritual Realm: The Role of Proximal and Distal Religious Constructs in Marital Functioning," *Journal of Family Psychology* 13, no.3 (1999): 321.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 325.

<sup>52</sup>Bradfield.

<sup>53</sup>Chaplain (COL) Donald Taylor, FORSCOM Command Chaplain, Memorandum for Record, Analysis of FORSCOM Installation Activity Reports for FY 00, Office of the FORSCOM Chaplain, Ft. McPherson, GA, 2 March 2001.

<sup>54</sup>Discussion with Dr. Bruce Bell, Army Research Institute, 11 May 2001, who kindly furnished a number of studies used in this paper.

<sup>55</sup>U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, *1995 Survey of Army Families III* (Alexandria, VA: Army Personnel Survey Office, 1995) 5, question 27.

<sup>56</sup>James A. Martin et al., eds., *The Military Family: A Practice Guide for Human Service Providers* (Alexandria, VA: The Army Research Institute, 2000), 143,159.

<sup>57</sup>FM 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, 19.

<sup>58</sup>H.A. DeWeerd, ed., *Selected Speeches and Statements of General of the Army George C. Marshall* (Washington, DC: The Infantry Journal, 1945), 121-122.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>61</sup>John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 274; FM 22-100, *Army Leadership, Be Know, Do*, 3-3.

- <sup>62</sup>*Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, 128.
- <sup>63</sup>Lord Moran, 184.
- <sup>64</sup>Keegan, 335.
- <sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 335-36.
- <sup>66</sup>Gabriel, 39.
- <sup>67</sup>John W. Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: A History of the United States Army Chaplain Corps, 1975-1995* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1997), part two, 155-156; Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967) 519-20.
- <sup>68</sup>Keegan, 279, 280, 333.
- <sup>69</sup>William Manchester, *Goodbye Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1980), 391, 393.
- <sup>70</sup>Jonathan Shay, "Trust: Touchstone for a Practical Military Ethos," in *Spirit, Blood, and Treasure: The American Cost of Battle in the 21st Century*, ed. Donald Vandergriff (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2001), E-1-2.
- <sup>71</sup>Samuel A. Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), 611-13.
- <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 177.
- <sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 173.
- <sup>75</sup>Kellett, 194.
- <sup>76</sup>John W. Brinsfield, "Army Values and Ethics: A Search for Consistency and Relevance," *Parameters* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 79-82.
- <sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup>Kellett, 195.
- <sup>80</sup>Ellwood C. Nance, *Faith of Our Fighters* (St. Louis, MO: Bethany Press, 1944), 242.
- <sup>81</sup>John W. Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith*, part two, 91.
- <sup>82</sup>Charles Moskos and Laura Miller, 5.
- <sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 123; interview with Chaplain (Colonel) David P. Peterson, Ft. McPherson, GA, 22 May 2001. Approximately an hour after General Schwarzkopf's staff meeting concluded, President George Bush, Vice President Quayle, General Powell, Secretary Cheney, and most of the President's cabinet attended a prayer service at Ft. Meyer, VA, for the same purpose. The service was also attended by the three Chiefs of Chaplains and by Dr. Billy Graham, the guest speaker. *Ibid.*, 125.
- <sup>84</sup>Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-63-12, *Fit to Win: Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 1.
- <sup>85</sup>As cited in Brinsfield, "Army Values and Ethics: A Search for Consistency and Relevance," 82.
- <sup>86</sup>Gen. John W. Hendrix, Personal Notes, Memorial Day Prayer Breakfast Welcoming Address, Ft. McPherson, GA, 22 May 2001, 1.
- <sup>87</sup>Nance, 190-191. Chaplain Nance, a faculty member at the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Harvard University in 1944, recorded many of Gen. George C. Marshall's comments on the soldier's spirit and the type of chaplains he wanted in the Army. Nance's work was later quoted by Daniel B. Jorgensen, an Air Force chaplain, in *The Service of Chaplains to Army Air Units, 1917-1946* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, 1961), 277; and by Robert L. Gushwa, an Army chaplain, in *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 186. Evidently Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) William Arnold in Information Bulletins sent to Army chaplains world-wide as early as August 1941 also regularly quoted General Marshall. See Daniel B. Jorgensen, 146, 299.
- <sup>88</sup>FM 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be Know, Do*, 20, para. 3-82. Inspirational leadership is intended to combine transformational and transactional leadership styles as indicated in FM 22-100.
- <sup>89</sup>The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to The Army, OS-61, p. OS 15.
- <sup>90</sup>Lt. Gen. John E. Miller and Maj. Kurt C. Reiting, "Force XXI Battle Command," *Military Review* 75, no. 4, (July-August 1995): 6-9.
- <sup>91</sup>Brig. Gen David A Fastabend and Robert H. Simpson, "The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army: Adapt or Die," *Army Magazine*, February 2004, Introduction by Gen. Peter J. Schoemaker, 14.
- <sup>92</sup>Task Force TLS, 16.
- <sup>93</sup>Gen. Kevin P Byrnes, TRADOC News Service interview, 3 June 2003.
- <sup>94</sup>Opening Statement (As prepared by) Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. Before Readiness Subcommittee of House Armed services Committee, Washington, DC, 11 March 2004.
- <sup>95</sup>Miller and Reiting, 9.
- <sup>96</sup>Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 14.
- <sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.
- <sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 16.

- <sup>99</sup>Wright, 418; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 354.
- <sup>100</sup>Howe and Strauss, 149, 234.
- <sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 164, 234.
- <sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 144, 164.
- <sup>103</sup>Chris Roberts, "Number of Single-parent Families Increases 42%," *The State* [Columbia, SC], 23 May 2001, A-1, A-12.
- <sup>104</sup>Howe and Strauss, 197.
- <sup>105</sup>D. W. Miller, "Programs in Social Work Embrace the Teaching of Spirituality," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 May 2001, A-12.
- <sup>106</sup>Howe and Strauss, 19.
- <sup>107</sup>Reported by Channel 3 Television News, Atlanta, GA, 5 May 2001.
- <sup>108</sup>*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 13 May 2001.
- <sup>109</sup>Beth McMurtrie, "Crusading for Christ, Amid Keg Parties and Secularism," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 May 2001, A42.
- <sup>110</sup>Gilbert W. Fairholm, *Capturing the Heart of Leadership: Spirituality and Community in the New American Workplace* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 24-25.
- <sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.
- <sup>112</sup>FM 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, 19, para. 3-77.
- <sup>113</sup>William Ernest Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1918), 200.
- <sup>114</sup>During the time of this writing the Abu Ghraib Prison incident is unfolding which may make this a good case study for future Leadership studies.
- <sup>115</sup>This story is based on a personal interview given by Lt. Col. Christopher Hughes to CH (Maj.) Peter Baktis during the summer of 2003 as a member of the OIF Study Group.
- <sup>116</sup>As the burial site of Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad.
- <sup>117</sup>Rowan Scarborough, "Army files charge in combat tactic," the *Washington Times*, 29 October 2003.
- <sup>118</sup>Baktis, OIF interview.
- <sup>119</sup>*Washington Times*, 13 December 2003, reported that Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno fined Lt. Col. West \$5,000 in lieu of a court-martial. West returned to Ft. Hood, Texas, to await retirement orders.
- <sup>120</sup>The ATLDP Officer Study Report to the Army, p. 0S-3
- <sup>121</sup>As cited in Maj. Michael D. Slotnick, "Spiritual Leadership: How Does the Spirit Move You?" Defense Technical Information Center Technical Report AD-A258 523 (Alexandria, VA: DTIC, 1992), 4.
- <sup>122</sup>A summary of findings from previous references including the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, the Army Research Institute, Lord Charles Moran, William E. Hocking, and John Keegan. For advice to chaplains see Chaplain Milton Haney's "The Duties of a Chaplain" as cited in John W. Brinsfield, "In the Pulpit and in the Trenches," *Civil War Times Illustrated*, September/October 1992, 72-73; and FM 16-1, *Religious Support Doctrine: The Chaplain and the Chaplain Assistant* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, November 1989), 5-2.
- <sup>123</sup>Hocking, 49.



*Dr. John Wesley Brinsfield is the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Historian at the U.S. Army Chaplain School, Fort Jackson, S.C. From 1969 to 2002, Brinsfield served as a chaplain in the Army, retiring with the rank of colonel.*



*Chaplain (LTC) Peter Baktis currently serves as the Deputy Command Chaplain, U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army, in Heidelberg, Germany. He has published more than 17 articles and book reviews in theological journals worldwide.*

# Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership

**(Editor's Note:** This manuscript was adapted from transcripts at the Strategic Leader Development Training at Hilton Head, SC, March 7-14, 2009. ©Ruth Haley Barton, 2009. This message is adapted from *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.)

*By Ms. Ruth Haley Barton*

I am grateful to be a part of your gathering because you, as chaplains and senior chaplains, are on the front lines of soul care in the Army. It is a privilege to talk with you about a passion that we all share—the care of our own souls (because if we are empty at the soul level, we have nothing to give), and also the soul care of those that we minister to.

As we begin, let's take a moment to be quiet in God's presence and to ask that the Spirit of God would be our true teacher and director as we're here together. I invite you to become quiet inside yourself. The scriptures speak of the fact that we are able to be still and know that He is God, that there is a knowing that comes to us in the stillness that does not come to us in the words. So in the quietness, may we be still and have a renewed sense of the reality of God in our lives this morning. (Moment of silence.) *Come, Holy Spirit and be our guide. We ask that the words that You speak to us deep in our souls will be the words that we will remember; and that as we walk out of this room at the end of this hour, it will be your words that we take with us. We ask for a movement of Your Spirit through the room today as we're together in this place. And we thank You in advance for Your presence and Your working among us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

## **Longing for More**

We're here to talk today about the soul—your soul, my soul, and the soul of our leadership. When I talk about the soul, I'm not talking about some ill-defined, amorphous, soft-around-the-edges sort of a thing. I'm talking about the part of you that is most real, the very essence of you that God knew before He brought you forth in physical form. It's the part of you that will continue to exist after your physical body goes into the ground. Sometimes it is hard for us to imagine that our souls are more real than our bodies because our bodies seem very real. They are physical. They are something we can see and touch; and yet the scriptures are clear that the most real part of us is the soul of us. It is the part of you that exists beyond any role that you play, beyond any rank that you hold, beyond any relationship that seems to define you, or any notoriety that you might have achieved.

Today, I want to talk to you about the part of you that longs for more of God than you have right now. When we are able to be honest with ourselves, even those of us who have achieved a senior position related to spiritual leadership, recognize that there is a part of us that longs for more of God than what we have right now. There is the part of us that knows our own broken places and longs to be healed, to be changed, to be transformed in God's presence. There is the part of us that longs for love, that longs to be valued beyond anything that we can do for another person but just for who we are. There is a part of us as leaders that might even be missing God right now even as we speak.

As we sit here together today, you might be aware that it has been a long time since you have experienced a touch from God that was for your own soul. In the quiet, you might find yourself

longing for a touch from God that's for yourself, personally. The part of you that longs for God is the truest part of you. It is the soul of you. It is the part of you that even on this day might be aware of the fact that if something new doesn't happen in your own spiritual life, you might not be able to go on. Maybe no one else knows that, but you know it. You know that if God doesn't come to you in a way that you can see and feel and know, you're not sure how you will make it much longer. The soul is the part of you that is capable of this kind of awareness; it has the capacity to reach for more of God than what you have right now.

Scriptures are clear that we long for God because he first longed for us. We love God because He first loved us. The very fact that any of us can sit here today able to feel and experience a sense of longing for God indicates that God is already present, already at work in our lives wooing us to Himself. So if you are experiencing any sense of longing for God today, that is a good thing. It means that God is already there, deep inside, calling you deeper to Himself on this day.

### **When Leaders Lose Their Souls**

Several years ago, I had an experience that was very sobering as a person in ministry. I had been in ministry all my life. I am a pastor's kid and I entered into pastoral ministry myself right after college. My brothers are pastors; I work with pastors. I consider myself to be a pastor to pastors. But there came a day when I knew that I was losing my soul. We had had a very intense season in ministry in the Transforming Center, the ministry I am a part of, in which we had held more events than we could realistically handle. On top of that, I had maintained a very heavy travel and writing and speaking schedule. And in a conversation with one of my colleagues one day—the kind of conversation in which friends can be honest with each other—I heard myself say something that surprised me. Before I could censor myself, these words slipped out, “I'm tired of helping other people enjoy God. I just want to enjoy God for myself.”

Anyone here ever felt that way?

It is quite a moment when you realize that you are tired of helping other people find God and that it has been a long time since you have experienced God for yourself. This moment was a surprising moment for me and it was also alarming because what I was saying at that point was that my leadership—the part of me that was trying to lead other people to God—was, at that moment, disconnected from the reality of God in my own life. I hadn't lost my salvation. I wasn't backslidden. But truth was that that life-giving connection between me and God had slipped, and there I was, as a person in Christian ministry, missing God in the depths of my own being.

In the quietness that followed that comment, my colleague and I were both very quiet for a moment and he said, “Well, that's a problem!” And I said, “That's why we pay you the big bucks—have that kind of insight? Yes, indeed, it *is* a problem.” It *is* a problem when a person in Christian ministry is missing God in the depths of their own lives. And I realized as I sat quietly with that statement, that there was something underneath that was even truer. The truest statement that I wanted to make to God on that day was, “I miss You.”

I was so surprised by the fact that that was the reality in my life. It felt like one of those times when you are standing in the ocean with your back is to the surf, and there is a wave that has been gathering strength behind you. All of a sudden it hits you and it knocks you over from behind. The reality that I was *missing God* in the midst of my life in ministry knocked me over like a big wave and I thought How have I gotten here? How have I gotten to the place where, 15 to 20 years into ministry, I am missing God, and the truest thing I can say to God right now is, “I miss You?”

Such moments come to all of us in Christian ministry, moments when we feel disconnected from the soul of leadership. All of us in Christian ministry experience moments when we our leadership

feels like something we put on—like putting on your uniform this morning. Sometimes our leadership feels like something that we pull out of the closet and we put on as our uniform for the day rather than being something that flows from a deep, inner well that is fed by a pure source. Sometimes it feels like something external to ourselves rather than something that flows naturally from who we are. Perhaps you've experienced this dynamic in your own way. You are preparing to lead a Bible study, or to preach a sermon, or to lead a prayer experience, and you realize that you are preparing to exhort other people in values that you are not living yourself right now, or at least not in the deep-inside ways. It can be discouraging when we catch ourselves casting a vision for a way of life that we ourselves are not experiencing, at least not in the moment.

There may be a time when someone needs pastoral care and you rally your energy to go through the motions, but you realize that your heart is devoid of real compassion. The truth is that you really don't care. Or there are moments when a new level of leadership is required of you, and you realize that you are so tired on the inside you don't know if you have what it takes. You put a brave face on it for everyone else, you step up and you seek to do it to the best of your ability, but inside there's a level of depletion and exhaustion that you don't even know how to articulate.

These are moments for feeling ashamed. They're not occasions for judging ourselves harshly or feeling like a failure. They are moments for us to just notice because this kind of inner clarity is a sign that God is at work calling us back to the reality of His presence in our own lives. Such moments are important for us as leaders because it is a signal that we may be losing our souls. Jesus indicates that it is possible to gain the whole world and lose your soul. In the book of Matthew and in the book of Mark he says, "What does it profit a person if they gain the whole world and lose their own soul? What is worth more than your soul?" The Greek word *psyche* is the word that we translate *soul* or *life*; these two words are used interchangeably to translate the same Greek word into the English language. What Jesus is asking here is, "What does it profit a person if you gain the whole world of external success, but you lose your own life, that which is most real?" He is saying that it is possible to lose your very self in the midst of all kinds of success. He is not necessarily talking about your physical life (although that can happen, too); he is talking about losing the very essence of who you are, the essence of who God created you to be.

### **How Is It With Your Soul?**

I love the fact that Jesus points to this truth by asking a question. He doesn't just give us trite phrases and easy platitudes. Instead, he frames a very penetrating question. He says, "What does it profit a person if they gain the whole world and lose their own soul?" It is a question that forces us to go deep down inside of ourselves and to muck around in there and to say, "Yeah, what is worth losing my soul?" It forces us to do the hard work of scrolling through the different elements of our lives and saying, is success worth losing my soul? Is having a particular material thing worth losing my own soul? Is being seen as being successful in a particular way worth losing my own soul?

I believe that if Jesus were talking to us as spiritual leaders today, he might take it a step further and point out that it is possible to gain the whole world of ministry success—to be a great spiritual leader by external indicators—and to lose your own soul in the midst of it all. He might even point out that when leaders lose their souls, so do the churches, the organizations and the groups that they serve because they don't have spiritual substance to bring to the people who are looking to them for spiritual leadership.

How many Wesleyans do we have in the group today? When the early Wesleyan bands of Christ followers got together in their small group meetings, the first question they asked each other was "How is it with your soul?" This is the very best possible question for us as Christian leaders

gathered together here today in light of Jesus' warning and in light of what we witness in and around us. I know that in this group today, you all have experienced some significant losses among you as chaplains. You are carrying grief about those who have been lost to you because they couldn't make it, because they didn't know how to go on. In light of Jesus' warning and in light of seeing people around us go down, unable to make it for the long haul of ministry, what could be a better question than, "How is it with your soul?" That is my question for you this morning and it's my question to myself every day. How is it with your soul?

Some of us are wearing a brave face, but we know that we are losing bits and pieces of our souls every day. Others of us are still hanging in there fairly well, but we're not sure how long we will last. All of us have watched ministry friends and colleagues endure heartbreak or failure, or betrayal at such a profound level that they have, in some way, left the ministry. Those of us who have been in ministry for any length of time are under no illusion that we are not exempt from such outcomes. We know that if it were not for God's grace, any one of us could fall off the path of our calling. And so today I want to invite you to assess the well being of your own soul by moving through a few characteristics of what loss of soul might look like. I want to be very concrete about this because I don't think that it helps to be highly conceptual and highly theoretical about matters that are this important. So what does it look like when someone is losing their soul? What does it look like in you? What does it look like in the people that you're ministering to and seeking to lead spiritually?

The assessment that I have for us today contains fifteen statements that can be important indicators regarding the health of your soul. As I read through these statements, imagine having a continuum for each one that indicates that this is *always*, *often*, *sometimes*, *rarely*, or *never* true about you. When I make each statement, think about where you might be on the continuum relative to that particular descriptive statement. These questions are not meant to bring about guilt or shame or a sense of failure. Rather, they're just an opportunity for you to get a little bit more honest with God, to say what you need to say to God. If you recognize in any of these areas that you are slipping or even on the brink of disaster—and this is probably not something that anyone else knows—then you might simply ask to God, "What are we going to do about that?" Be assured that you are not alone in your awareness this morning. Whatever it is that you become aware of as we move through these questions, God is with you. God is caring for you. God is the shepherd of your own soul even while you're shepherding other peoples' soul. God is with you in it with you and wants to help you to discover what needs to be done so that your soul does not continue to slip away. Let's move through a few of these together.

1. More and more often I notice that I'm going through the motions of ministry, teaching things I'm not currently experiencing in my own life, manufacturing emotion that I'm not feeling, providing pastoral care but I'm aware that I don't really care. Always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

2. I'm aware of a nagging sense that something is not quite right, but I don't seem to be able to take the time or to make the effort to look into it. The truth is I'm not even sure I know how to look into it.

3. I find myself rushing from one thing to the next without time to really pay attention to what's going on in and around me.

4. I'm keeping up with what pastoral ministry requires, but deep down I feel that I have lost touch with who I am in God and what God has called me to do. I am tired, not just physically but spiritually and emotionally. I don't really know how to get rested. Always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

5. I'm aware of an underlying irritability and restlessness just beneath the surface of my life.

6. I can't stop working even when I know I need to.



7. I have become emotionally numb, unable to experience a full range of human emotion.
8. I find myself increasingly prone to escapist behaviors, mindless eating, mindless television viewing, substance abuse, compulsive spending.
9. I find myself indulging in escapist fantasies, dreaming about being somewhere else or having a different life.
10. I do not have time to attend to my human needs, for exercise, eating right, getting enough sleep, doctors' appointments and medical procedures, getting the car washed, making repairs at home.
11. I find myself hoarding energy, avoiding people when I'm out and about or holing up in my office or at home for fear that routine interactions will rob me of that last little bit of energy.
12. My spiritual practices have slipped. Even though I know that such practices as solitude and silence, prayer and Scripture are life giving, when it comes time for them, I don't have the energy.
13. I feel isolated with no one to fully confide in and no one who seems to fully understand my situation.
14. My staff team or the people that I lead with are very good at strategic planning and thinking our way into solutions, but we do not have a clearly articulated process for discernment at the leadership level aside from a perfunctory prayer at the end of our meeting, we don't have a way of seeking God together. We don't know how to do it together as a leadership group.
15. It has been a long time since I have felt connected with the presence of God in my own life beyond the role that I play. Sometimes I suspect that my vision for ministry has become more important to me than my own relationship with God. Always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

These are some of the very objective categories that we can utilize to assess the state of our souls. When we begin to notice two or three of those being too far towards the *always* side of the continuum, is time for us to stop whatever we're doing and to say to God, "What are we going to do about that?" It's whole lot like losing your credit card. You put your credit card in your wallet and you think it's there but the next time you go to use it, you reach for it and it's not there. And what happens? It's a moment of panic. You stop whatever you're doing, and you start retracing your steps, making phone calls, and looking under the couch cushions! It doesn't matter what you've got going, you need to find that credit card and there's a sense of urgency about it.

I wish that we had that sense of urgency when we have a sense that we're losing our souls. I wish that when we have any inkling that we are losing our souls, we would stop everything and to say, "I have to find that because if I don't, great damage could be done." While it's uncomfortable sometimes for us those of us who have been in ministry for a long time to admit to such a thing, the soulful leader, the spiritual leader, pays attention to these inner dynamics rather than ignoring them. Rather than continuing the charade or judging ourselves too harshly, we decide that we are going to pay attention and move into deeper level of self-awareness so that we can choose more wisely. Spiritual leadership emerges from our willingness to cultivate the inner life, that place where God's Spirit witnesses with my spirit about things that are true. Spiritual leadership emerges from this place as God's Spirit does stir up our deepest questions. This is mere narcissistic naval gazing or self absorption; it is the cultivation of an inner life with God that helps us to stay on the path of becoming a true self in God, a self that is capable of a truer and ever-deepening yes to God's call upon our lives.

### **A Leader with Strength of Soul**

I have served on the pastoral staff in several churches and most recently have served as the founding president of an organization called the Transforming Center. As the stakes have gone higher in my own life and leadership, I have been drawn to the story of Moses for a couple of different

reasons. One is because Moses was able to last for the long haul. He had the strength to make it. He didn't give up. His leadership experience was very difficult, as we know, but he was able to make it for the long haul of leadership. I believe that his staying power was not due to the fact that he knew how to think about leadership in interesting ways or how to conceptualize it and make three-point outlines about it. Rather, he allowed the challenges of his responsibilities as a leader to catalyze and to draw him deeper and deeper into a level of reliance upon God that he might not have been willing to pursue if his leadership hadn't pushed him there.

Moses' story demonstrates that we don't have to lose God in the midst of our leadership. We can approach leadership as a catalytic place for our souls' journey and find God in the midst of it. But it will take intentionality. The fact that Moses was pushed out to the edge so many times put him in a place where he had to seek God regularly and routinely because he literally had no place else to go!

The other thing I love about the story of Moses is the fact that Moses' life and leadership was so difficult from every standpoint, and the Scriptures are unflinching in describing these difficulties. In a Time magazine interview a few years ago, Elie Weisel, the holocaust survivor and Pulitzer Prize winner who wrote *Night*, was interviewed by Time magazine. They asked him, "Who is your favorite biblical hero?" and he answered "Moses, because Moses was the greatest legislator and commander in chief of perhaps the first liberation army. He was a prophet, God's representative to the people and the peoples' representative to God, and he never had a good day in his life. Either the people were against him or God was against him." The Scriptures don't hold back from giving us a very realistic picture of the crucible that Moses' leadership experience was for him.

Moses' life in leadership can actually be viewed through the lens of his encounters with God in solitude and how he was strengthened and guided through those encounters. If you look at Moses' life carefully, you see that Moses routinely sought God or God sought him. There was an encounter between the two of them. And then Moses emerged from that place did what God told him to do—except for one notable exception! The one time when Moses defied God had very serious ramifications. But Moses' consistent rhythm of life was seeking God in solitude, encountering God in solitude and having some sort of interaction, and then emerging from solitude and doing exactly what God told him to do. For Moses, leadership was that simple.

Now, I am not someone who means to simplify very complex questions in ways that are not helpful. I've been around the leadership block too many times for that. But I also believe that there is simplicity beyond the complexity, and this may be it for us as leaders. Solitude is the key discipline for everyone in the spiritual life, but solitude and silence are particularly significant for people in spiritual leadership, because that is the primary place where our souls are renewed in God's presence, it is the primary place where we receive guidance for the really complex issues of leadership where our own thinking cannot bring us to the answer. I wonder, is there anybody in this room today that has an issue where you realize that all the thinking that you brought to it is not bringing forth the answer? Yes indeed! Many of us have an issue like that. And solitude is the place where we listen to the voice, the still, small voice of God that has a wisdom that we could never think our way into.

From the New Testament, we understand that the wisdom of this world is the foolishness of God and that the wisdom of God is the foolishness of this world. Human wisdom is inadequate for deepest complexities of leadership. This is the place where we are cast upon God's mercy, and we enter into God's presence and fight it out there. We say to God, "I ain't leaving until I've heard a word from You!" But we also make the commitment that when we hear that word, we will do what God has guided us to do, even if it appears to be the foolishness of this world. *That* is spiritual leadership and spiritual leadership often has an element to it that doesn't fit with the wisdom of this world. Solitude and silence are the places where we enter into God's presence with our knottiest

leadership questions, and we wait for the still, small voice of God.

### **A Leader's Invitation to Solitude**

Solitude is a very challenging discipline for those of us who are in leadership and many of us preach it better than we practice it. One of the reasons for this, I believe, is that the activities and the experiences associated with leadership can be very addicting. The idea that we can do something about this, that, or the other thing feeds something in us that is voracious in its appetite, and that something is the ego, or the false self, that over time identifies itself and shores itself up with external accomplishments and achievements with roles and titles with power and prestige. Leadership roles by their very nature offer a lot of fodder for the ego even when they are attached to spiritual endeavors, and maybe most especially when they are attached to spiritual endeavors. You got the ego's desire to succeed. But then, there is the idea as a Christian person or as a spiritual person that we can succeed *spiritually*, and so there's something about *that* that can be very seductive.

Solitude and silence as spiritual practices require us to remove ourselves from the arena where we're used to getting so much of our identity. For the leader it can be difficult, if not impossible, to pull ourselves away from the public arena long enough to be quiet in God's presence no matter how much mental ascent we give to it. Yes, we're busy. All of us are busy as leaders. There's no question about that. Solitude necessitates that we pull away from our busyness, and it's never easy. But I wonder if the real reason that we resist actually taking time to be in God's presence has more to do with the anxiety that we feel when we pull ourselves away from that which we have allowed to identify ourselves and to define us externally. And, usually, we're not willing to let go of that unless we're desperate. As we discover in Moses' story that it almost always takes a level of desperation for a leader to enter into a substantive experience of solitude, and this is exactly where Moses' journey into solitude begins.

Moses was destined to be a leader. He was gifted to be a leader. He was expected to be a leader. When you're raised as the son of a princess, there is no other career path for you except to prove yourself in a leadership arena. You are groomed to lead. You are scrutinized about your leadership capacities, and expectations are high. But Moses had a little problem. Moses was adopted so he was not an Egyptian by birth and there was nothing that could change that. He may have had a bit of a chip on his shoulder about the whole thing, always having something to prove because he never quite fit in. Moses was an outsider both with his own people and with the people in the Egyptian court where he was adopted and was now living. The question about his own identity and who he was supposed to be, must have been a very deep question for Moses. Should he fit into the environment in which he had been raised, and follow the path marked out for him there, or should he identify with his own people and the traditions that were his own heritage and try to live by those rules instead? And how much choice did he really have?

This must have quite a conundrum for Moses and there is a poignant little verse in Exodus 2 that speaks to it. In verse 11 it says that "Moses went out to his people." I think this phrase captures an important aspect of Moses' life—that he was torn between his life in Pharaoh's court and his longing for his own people. No matter where he had been raised and no matter what kind of trappings there were in the Egyptian court, he was a Hebrew and in the early years of his life he was shaped by the values and the faith tradition of the Hebrews. But then he was ripped from his home and placed into a pagan court. Who knows how often Moses went to visit his people and the heart tug that he felt when he was there? Who knows whether he wished he could stay? Who knows how much he felt like an outsider and wished that he could fit in?

On this particular day, Moses went out to visit his people and the anger and the conflicted that he had been harboring erupted when he witnessed an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew. His anger rose up within him and he lashed out, killing the Egyptian and then trying to bury the evidence of his sin in the sand. And here, we see what I call Moses' leadership BS, his leadership before solitude. Moses leadership before solitude was raw and undisciplined, and it was volatile and it was violent. His leadership was at the mercy of his own unresolved past, his own unexamined inner dynamics, his own unacknowledged emotions and life patterns. The raw leadership was there. Moses had a desire to make a difference and he had enough leadership ability to make a difference, but in this case his emotions overcame him in such a way that his leadership could not be a force for good. It had not been refined by a real encounter with God in solitude. This is a flesh and blood example of what Paul describes in Romans 7—"when I want to do good evil is close at hand."

When Moses realized the magnitude of what he has done and the fact that others know of his sin, he runs away into the wilderness. Into solitude. This glimpse of the destructive power of his undisciplined, unexamined leadership was so frightening that he said (in effect) "This part of me, if left to itself, will not do any good for anyone." And so he ran. Yes, he ran because he was afraid of Pharaoh and he was afraid of the consequences of his sin, but I also think that Moses left because he had a glimpse of the fact that his leadership, as it existed at that point in his life, could not be a force for good. And so Moses does something that none of us will have the chance to do at this point. He spent 40 years in solitude. And the first thing that happened to him was that solitude became the place of our own conversion.

### **The Place of Our Own Conversion**

We are all intent on seeing people around us become converted, but solitude is first and foremost the place of *our own* conversion. It's the place where we experience our own salvation and I don't know about you, but I *need* to be saved every day. I need to be saved every day, from myself, from my own sin patterns, from my own unexamined motives, from the influences of life in this culture. Solitude is the place where we experience God's salvation, God's redemption, the conversion of our own sin patterns, day after day, after day. In solitude, God begins to refine that which is raw and undisciplined within us little by little. And that is exactly what Moses' life shows us.

I don't think Moses knew much about solitude when he first went into the wilderness but it didn't matter because solitude was already starting to do its good work. Moses settled down by a well in Midian. In the Scriptures and also in spiritual classics, the well is understood to be a metaphor for the deeper places of our own souls and the deeper places of God. That word *settled* is important because Moses does settle down. He becomes quieter on the inside of himself and the next time we see Moses exercising any leadership at all, he is able to exercise leadership for good. Moses clearly had a heart for justice. He hated to see people getting abused and that's what triggered him in Exodus 2. But this is a new day and on this day, Moses sees this poor shepherd girl named Zipporah and her sisters trying to water their flocks, and there were some abusive shepherds who wouldn't let them get near the well. Moses intervened and he was able to defend these shepherd girls and help them water their sheep. The big difference is that he was able to help the situation *without killing anybody*. Now I call that progress, don't you? That is spiritual transformation at its best! Moses is already changing. Solitude is already having a good effect in that Moses' leadership is now a force for good. He is now able to use his natural passion for justice and his leadership abilities in a way that really serves others. In solitude Moses' unrefined, volatile leadership becomes much more subject to a truer self and to God.

So Moses receives the life that God gives him there in the wilderness—a life that included a wife

and eventually a son. When his oldest son is born, he names his son as a way of naming himself. He faces himself with more courage and realism and he names his son Gershom because “I have been an alien in a foreign land.” Finally, Moses is able to admit, “This is what has shaped me. Being raised as an alien in a foreign land has made me angry. Being raised as an alien in a foreign land has given me a twisted kind of leadership. This is who I am. This is what has shaped me.”

All of us who have been born into this sinful world have aspects of our leadership or our character that have been twisted in ways that make it difficult for us to bring good to others. Eventually, in solitude, we’re able to get more honest about that. Over time, we are able to be more honest about what has really shaped us and our leadership even now. Although our leadership attempts might look very positive to others, some of us know that there are darker dynamics connected to our leadership and when we name our reality correctly we begin to find our identity more truly in God. We become more solid in God’s presence.

### **The Practice of Paying Attention**

There is something about this kind of honesty in God’s presence that opens up a space for God to come and visit us. And that’s what we see in Exodus 3. Right after Moses names himself more honestly in God’s presence (“I have been an alien in a foreign land”) it’s almost like God says, “Oh good! Now we’re finally getting somewhere. Now there’s a real person for me to deal with!”

Have you ever been in a relationship with someone and you feel like they’re just snowing you all along? And then, finally, they say something that’s really honest and really true, and all of a sudden, you can *see* them. All of a sudden, they feel like they’re more solid and they look more real sitting there or standing there in front of you. When we finally say truth to each other—even if it’s not pretty—there is something *real* that happens just like it did between God and Moses. The next thing that takes place in Moses’ spiritual journey is that God Himself shows up. Up until now, God has not shown up in the story. We see evidence of God’s presence in Moses’ life, but God has not interacted directly with Moses. But shortly after this honest admission about himself, Moses is out tending Jethro’s flocks and he ventures a little further than usual and stumbles onto Horeb, the mountain of God. There he sees a bush that was burning but is not consumed. Moses says to himself, “I have got to turn aside and look at this great site.” *And when God saw that Moses had turned aside to look, he spoke to Moses out of the burning bush.*

I think this is very interesting. This sequence of events indicates to me that there is a cause and effect relationship between our willingness to turn aside and look—to pay attention—and God’s willingness to speak.

How many of you today would say that you are longing for a word from God, that you know that deep inside there’s something in your life where you know you need a word from God, not a word from anybody else but a word from God Himself? How many of you that if you heard that word, you would obey? One of the reasons that so many of us are longing for a word from God but are not receiving that word is that we don’t have any time to pay attention. We don’t have any space in our lives to turn aside and look at the bush that’s burning in our own backyard. Solitude is the place where we take time to pay attention to those things in our own lives that are out of the ordinary, the bush burning in the middle of our own back yard, that thing that is a little bit extraordinary. In solitude we take time to notice our own lives and to God, “What does it mean? Speak to me.” And if spiritual leadership is anything, it is the ability to pay attention to all things burning. If spiritual leadership is anything, it’s the ability to notice the divine activity of God and to listen to God’s voice in the midst of it.

And this is where the story starts to get really exciting because the first thing that God speaks to

Moses about is his calling. Now that Moses has been stripped of at least a few layers the false self and he is no longer functioning out of his anger and his own unexamined motives...now that he doing better at paying attention...God calls to him and says “There is something even more true about you than your false self. Even though you made a really big mistake back there in Egypt and even though your leadership was out of control and you did something you shouldn’t have done, there was something in that moment that was very true. You know what it’s like to be a displaced person. You know what it’s like to be abused, to see your people abused. You have a deep sense of justice and you are a Hebrew. That is who you are. And now I am asking you to take that—to take everything that you are and more—and to now step up and to use it in a good way for my good purposes.”

### **The Conundrum of Calling**

This must have been an amazing moment in Moses’ life—to see one of the greatest mistakes of his life in a whole new light. This was a moment Moses must have thought, “Maybe I’m not the washed up failure that I thought I was.” Moses had probably given up at this point, given up on ever being able to accomplish anything good in the world, given up on being a leader. But God said “No, everything that you are—your heredity, your genetics, your passion for justice, your leadership abilities, the fact that you have lived in both worlds and you know what it is to be displaced—is what I need. Now I want to you to take all that and I want you to live into all of who you are and become than who you are to accomplish my purposes.” The landscape of Moses’ life opened up and he was able to see that everything that had happened in his life had brought him to this moment. And that is what calling is. Calling is that moment when we realize that everything we are and everything we have experienced is a part of the package God is putting together to make us of special use to him. And there we stand in that holy place of knowing that God has called us to be who we are and also to transcend who we are in order to be a part of God’s purposes.

But Moses was not immediately convinced that he was the one for the job. Solitude quickly became a place where Moses argued with God, and he took full advantage of the opportunity. Since this is a familiar story, I am not going to repeat it here, but we can at least notice that Moses’ resistance was rooted in the identity issues that had plagued him all his life. He was afraid he couldn’t do it. He was afraid he wasn’t the right kind of person to step up to this job, and so he argued with God. He pushed God to the limit, and God pushed back, answering every objection Moses had with greater and greater assurances of his presence. Moses tried his best to argue his way out of his calling and his questions were real. Who am I that I should be the one to do this thing? And who are you, God? Why should people believe that You have spoken to me? What if the people won’t believe me, what if they won’t respond to my leadership? What will I say then?

In every single instance, God’s answer to Moses’ question was, “The people will respond to your leadership because you know me. They will follow you because they will know that you have met me, that you know my name deep in your being. *That* changes a person and *that* is what qualifies you for spiritual leadership, and *that* is why people will want to follow you right out of their familiar bondage into a brand new promised land.” And that, my friends, is the core, the very center of spiritual leadership. And here we experience one of the great paradoxes of leadership: *that it’s all about you and it’s not about you at all*. It’s all about you because you are the one God has chosen. I don’t think God had three top candidates for this job, do you? I think Moses was it. God is saying “It’s all about you because I have called you. You’re the one I’ve chosen.” But he’s also saying it’s not about you at all because it’s about God and what God will do through you. *That* is qualifies us for spiritual leadership, those encounters with God.

There is nothing more energizing to the human soul than to know that we have been called by God and then to somehow, by God's grace, say the deepest "yes" that we can. When that happens, it is holy ground. Isn't it? It's a very holy place. Perhaps part of what we're here for this morning is for you to your touch that place where you know you have been called by God. Can you remember where you were, the moment when you knew that you were called to pastoral ministry? And then, beyond that, the moment when you knew you were called to this particular expression of pastoral ministry—chaplaincy in the United States Army. Can you remember the moment when you knew that everything about you and all you had been through had brought you to this moment of stepping into God's kingdom purposes? Sometimes, after we have been in leadership for awhile, there are so many stresses and so many demands that we get disconnected from our calling. But there's hope! Solitude is the place where God renews our sense of calling. He reminds us that he is the One to whom we are accountable, and that everything we need to accomplish what he has called us to do is available to us in the person of God. And then solitude becomes not only a place for ourselves, it becomes a place of intercession.

### **Leadership as Intercession**

Once we have carved out this place for our own intimacy with God, it comes a place where regularly and routinely invite others into our prayers and hold them in God's presence. Another amazing thing about Moses' spiritual leadership was the pattern of intercession in his life. The people routinely challenged Moses, as we know. Starting with the Red Sea, they grumbled and complained and this pattern continued with utter predictability all the way until their journey with Moses over. But Moses didn't get caught up in arguing with the people. The Scriptures tell us that when the people complained, Moses cried out to the Lord. And this pattern of Moses' intercession was so profound and life-shaping that the people started to have a reverence for Moses in this regard. Exodus 33 tells us that there was a tent of meeting, a place established for the people to go and meet God. While it was available to anyone, when the people saw Moses enter the tent of meeting, they stood at the entrance of their tents reverently waiting until Moses came out. Sometimes they would even fall on their faces. They seemed to know that there was something in that for them and they longed for a spiritual leader who would listen to God and give them a word from the Lord. When Moses emerged from the tent of meeting, his face would shine, the Scriptures tell us, because he had been in God's presence. The people learned to count on Moses for that kind of spiritual leadership.

The picture of Moses' intercession that was most powerful was the battle with the Amalekites in Exodus 17. Moses usually served the general for the Israelite army, the one who was always out on the front lines. He was no a coward. But on this particular day he understood that his role was intercession. So he empowered Joshua to be the general on that day, and he went up to a mountain where he could see the whole battle. He knew that his job on that day was to stand on that mountain and intercede with the rod of God (a symbol of God's presence) in his hand. When Moses held up his hands in prayer, the Israelites won the battle. When Moses lowered his hands because he was exhausted, the Israelites started to lose the battle. The task of intercession was so demanding that Moses took a part of his leadership community with him. He took Aaron and Hur, his two closest companions, and they supported him physically by helping him to keep his hands raised while he was praying. And the Israelites won the battle on that day on the basis of Moses' intercession.

So I want to ask you today, what are your patterns of intercession? Intercession is at the heart of spiritual leadership because it is that place where we carry those people and concerns that we have into God's presence, recognizing that what most needs to be done in our lives or in anyone else's lives needs to be done by God Himself. If our leadership is to be uniquely spiritual, there must be

time and space for carrying the people we love, the people we're training, the people who are in such hard places and carrying such heavy burdens, the issues that are so complex and knotty into God's presence, and allowing God to come in and do what only God knows how to do.

Where is the place in your life where you are interceding for the people and the priorities that God has given you to care for? Where is the time and the space for you to sit in God's presence with your hands open to God, inviting the power of God into those places?

### **If Your Presence Will Not Go**

There is so much more that happened for Moses in solitude, in these encounters with God. You have the Book, you'll read it, but I want to conclude with what I believe is the most significant thing that happens for the leader in solitude: it becomes the place where the presence of God becomes our ultimate reality. In Exodus 33, Moses has come to the end of himself. He has just come out of the devastating incident with the Ten Commandments and the golden calf when the people turned away from God as described for us in Exodus 32. He had been on the mountain meeting with God on the people's behalf, he had received the Ten Commandments—which must have been an extraordinary spiritual experience—and when he came down from the mountain from what should have been a wonderful day of celebration became a day of devastation instead. He found that everyone has turned away from God and to make matters worse, his own brother, Aaron, had led the way.

And on that particular day, Moses' spiritual leadership required him to stand, literally, between the people and an angry God. He found himself begging God not to wipe them out. Many people did lose their lives that day, but because of Moses' intercession, many of them were spared and they were not wiped out completely. Moses did what was his to do on that day, but at the end of it all he is completely worn out and to make matters worse, God has threatened to leave the people. God said, "These people are so hard-nosed, so hard to deal with, that I'm not going to go with you any further." This is completely unacceptable to Moses and he says to God, "Now wait a second! That's not what I bargained for. I decided to take this journey of leadership because You said You'd be with me and You said You would be here with this people. *If your presence will not go, do not lead us up from here.*"

This is a powerful moment in the life of any leader. We have seen a vision of some sort of a promised land, something we think we can lead toward, but somewhere along the way, our relationship with God has slipped and that the presence of God is no longer palpable in our own lives. That's where Moses was. He was losing the presence of God, that aspect of the journey that gave it any meaning at all. So he digs in his heels and he says to God, "I'm not going any further if I don't have some assurance that you're with us." This is pivotal moment because what Moses was saying is that there's no promised land that's any more important to him than the presence of God. He is saying "There is no place I want to get to, except deeper and deeper into the presence of God. Without the presence of God, there is no place worth going to." For a visionary leader to come to this place is to come to a place of being cleared out of their own ego, cleared out of the sense that *they* are going to show up and save the world, and they are willing to stop because they know that there is something more important than anything they thought they were going to accomplish. To know, really *know* that the presence of God is our greatest good is a moment of utter clarity and purity in the life of a leader.

So Moses argues with God one more time, and God gives in and says, "Okay. I will go with you." But for Moses such wordy assurances just aren't good enough. He says, "I need a sign. I need something more than just your words." And God says, "I will do this thing for you. I will give you a sign. There is a place near me where you can stand, a protected place in the cleft of the rock." Moses



says, I want to see God's glory. And who doesn't want to see glory after all? Glory! We all want to see glory! But God knew that what Moses needed was something even deeper than that. Moses needed to see God's goodness *and* Moses needed to know that God was going to be good to him.

So Moses stood in the cleft of the rock and God's goodness passed by. We don't know much about what took place between God and Moses on that mountain because it's like the intimacy that passes between a husband and wife; it's too intimate and too private to speak about. But you know it changes you. And Moses was changed because he emerged from that place of encounter one more time, restored to ministry. He actually emerged with more than he had originally lost. He emerged with a new set of Ten Commandments but God also established a new covenant with his people. And Moses never again questioned his leadership the way that he had before. He had seen the goodness of God.

### **Re-envisioning the Promised Land**

I have come to believe that this moment—the moment when God becomes our ultimate reality—is the most important moment in the life of a leader, second only to the moment of our calling to Christ and to his service. And when we come to the end of our lives, this is the moment that matters the most. In Deuteronomy 34, Moses comes to the end of his life, and he sits on the mountainside with God, Mount Nebo to be exact. And God says to him, “You can look at the Promised Land but you cannot go in.” Now, I have to be honest and say that I have wrestled with the passage. I have felt that it what God did to Moses here was about the meanest thing you could do to a leader. It seemed like he was trying to rub Moses' nose in it by making him look and then telling him that he could not go in because of one sin. But what I understand now is that in that moment Moses is sitting on the side of that mountain and he looks at the Promised Land, and he realizes that what he most wants. He already has the presence of God and the presence of God *has become* his promised land. Now he and God are sitting on the side of the mountain at the end of 120 years of walking together. They're like an old, married couple that rock on the porch and they don't need to say much to each other because it just is satisfying to be together. And God says, “You're going to die here, on the side of this mountain.” And Moses says, “You know what? It's all right with me. I already have what my soul wants, and that is Your presence right here, right now.”

It reminds me of that moment in the life of Martin Luther King Jr., when on the night before he was assassinated he describes his own mountain-top experience. He says, “I have been to the mountain. Yes, I would like a long life, but I have been to the mountain and I have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, and that's all I need. I believe we're going to get there. I have no doubt that we're going to get there. I may not go with you, but I have been to the mountain. I have encountered the presence of God, and I don't need anything else.” A leader like that is cleared out, do you understand what I mean? They are cleared out of ego. They are cleared out of blinding sin patterns. They are cleared out of so much of the residual junk and garbage that comes from their own history. And they are able to just be where ever God has them in the moment.

I think that if Moses had been offended at all, if he had been upset about the outcomes of his life, he would've argued with God on the mountain, don't you? That was one thing he was really good at. But he didn't. And the reason he didn't argue with God and say, “Now wait a second! That's not fair!” is that *he had discovered the nearness of God as his greatest good*. For him, there was nothing in any promised land that was any better than what he already had—intimacy with God—and so he was willing to say yes to God one more time in that final and ultimate way. He was willing to die on the side of that mountain as one final step into the intimacy with God that he had been seeking all his life. The last verses of Deuteronomy 34 pay tribute to the life of Moses. “Never since has there arisen

a prophet in Israel like Moses whom the Lord knew face-to-face. He was unequalled for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the site of Israel.” (34:10-12)

And I don’t know about you, but that’s the kind of leader I want to be. I want to be the kind of leader that at the end of my life, people say, “She was a person who knew God face-to-face. And there were times when her face shined with the presence of God and she had a word that was God’s Word for us. She prayed for us and even when we didn’t agree, I know she prayed. And she was a person who argued with God and who was honest with God, and things were different because she wrestled with God. And whether what she accomplished with her life, mighty deeds or deeds that were just very simple and ordinary, they were accomplished through the power of God.” That’s the leader I want to be. So that when God invites me into that one final letting go, when God invites you into that one final letting go, may we be those who have lived a life of trusting God so deeply and so completely with our whole selves, that we do so peacefully. We are able to let go peacefully because we know we are letting go into the presence of God and we are confident that the will of God is the best thing that could happen to us under any circumstances. And those who are left know as that person who just followed God faithfully to the very end.

And that is my prayer for each one of you—that there would be a pattern in your lives that is characterized by walking into God’s presence, storming into God’s presence, doing whatever you need to do in God’s presence, having an encounter with God and then emerging from that place with the word of the Lord to you and to the people that you lead. I pray that you would emerge from that place willing to do whatever it is that God has called you to do even if it is the foolishness of this world. And I pray that at the end of your days when you sit on the mountain looking at all of your promised lands, that when God says it’s time, it’s time for that final step of faith into God’s presence, you are able to let go into God and be at peace in His presence.

And as we close today, I invite you to take a moment to imagine yourself on the side of that mountain. Maybe it’s that first time when you need something from God. You need some sort of an assurance that God is with you. You’ve lost your sense of it and today you’re saying to God, if something doesn’t break through, I’m not sure I’m willing to go on. Or maybe it’s you and God surveying all that you’ve done and led, and you know God has something to say to you and you’re willing to be quiet enough to let Him say it. Imagine yourself on the mountain with God. Allow yourself to say what you most need to say to God and to receive what He wants to say to you.

(Period of silence.)

The psalmist says *when I cried to you, you increased my strength of soul.* (Psalm 138:3) *Oh God, on this day, as a group of spiritual leaders, we ask you, we cry out to You to increase our strength of soul by Your power and by Your might. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.*



*Ruth Haley Barton is founding president of The Transforming Center ([www.thetransformingcenter.org](http://www.thetransformingcenter.org)), a ministry dedicated to caring for the souls of pastors and Christian leaders. A teacher, spiritual director, and retreat leader, she has served on the pastoral staff of several churches and is the author of numerous books and resources on the spiritual life including “Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, Sacred Rhythms” and “Invitation to Solitude and Silence.”*

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# TAQWAH and SABR: The Foundation of Spiritual Resilience in Islam

*By Chaplain (LTC) Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad*

Recognized to be the third of the three Abrahamic faith traditions, the religion of Al-Islam or Islam (as it is most commonly known) addresses the concept of Spiritual Resiliency from several perspectives. In this article I'll focus on two key foundational components within Islam: *taqwah* and *sabr*. These two terms are frequently mentioned in both the Qur'anic text and the Sunnah (recorded life example of Muhammad the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him) as they relate within the daily life of the Believer in Islam. I'll examine the relationship of these two terms to the concept of Spiritual Resiliency and I'll look at how *taqwah* and *sabr* have been used as stress management tools, especially when either a life-changing event or temporary crisis has occurred.

## **What is Spiritual Resiliency?**

According to Webster's Dictionary, "*spiritual*" is defined as "*of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit, the soul. Spirituality fosters a sense of meaning, wholeness, harmony, and connection with others—unity with all life, nature and the universe.*"<sup>1</sup> "*Resilience*" is defined as "*the ability to recover from or adjust easily to change or misfortune. To be elastic, flexible, rubbery, supple.*"<sup>2</sup> Froma Walsh, a noted scholar in Family Resilience, indicates that "resilience is the ability to rebound from crisis and overcome challenges."<sup>3</sup>

According to Henri Nouwen, a world-renowned spiritual guide and counselor, in his book *Spiritual Direction* states: "A spiritual life cannot be formed without discipline, practice, and accountability."<sup>4</sup> Every person who's ever claimed a personal faith orientation also has a set of beliefs and practices that will accompany it. These practices and beliefs, whether performed individually or in a group, over time, assist in the process of establishing "resiliency." Of all of our personal sources of resilience, spiritual resilience is the only one that is self-replenishing.<sup>5</sup> It has been shown through research that the very act of believing (in a Higher or Supreme Authority) adds to our resilience. "Like emotional resilience, spiritual resilience grows when shared."<sup>6</sup> I would also add that, not only those that have accepted the existence of a Supreme Being as a guiding, omnipotent force in their life, but also those who respectfully fear his displeasure, will find themselves being more resilient, especially during times of uncertainty. Therefore, if one relates this process to spiritual resiliency, one might expect a Muslim, Christian, Jew, Buddhist, Hindu, or other followers of religious doctrine, to demonstrate a greater capacity to withstand most crises or life-altering situations, particularly those individuals that practice their faith on a regular basis. It is here that the Arabic term *taqwah* finds its established context in Islam.

## **Taqwah and its Meaning in Islam**

The Arabic term *taqwah*, from the Qur'anic context, means to be conscious of Allah (God) at all times, in all places, regardless of the circumstances. It also means to know and to respect the boundaries and limitations established by God. It is the ultimate defense against evil inclinations and actions as described in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah (life example) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In the second chapter of the Qur'an, Almighty God says: "***This is the book (Qur'an); in it is sure guidance, without doubt, for***



**Chaplain (LTC) Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad and SPC Danny Salgado pose with three Afghani Nationals awaiting the Iftar activities (fast breaking) during Ramadan in Salerno, Afghanistan in 2007.**

*those who have taqwah (reverence God).”(2:2)7* So in Islam, it is not enough for the Muslim to affirm his faith (Iman) with the tongue only, but he/she must also possess *taqwah*.

Having *taqwah* enables a person to be constantly aware of both God’s presence and attributes, and is a reminder of their relationship and responsibility to God as His creation and servant. “The scholars in Islam

have explained that the way to *taqwah* is through obedience to God, avoiding disobedience, and striving to stay away from doubtful matters. *Taqwah* has been described as the single most important quality of a person, mentioned in the Qur’an.”<sup>8</sup> Those that have *taqwah* are referred to as the *Muttaqin*.

It can be said, then, that *taqwah* is the one single ingredient, that if absent in the life of the professed Muslim/ Believer, it would generally be known in a short period of time. Through regular incongruence of words and actions, the absence of *taqwah* becomes more obvious. I believe this type of inconsistency, over time, could have an adverse effect on one’s resiliency as well.

For example, during the month-long fast of Ramadan, a less observant Muslim who’s fasting would focus their attention only on abstaining from eating and drinking during the daylight hours; however the same person with *taqwah* would be consciously focused on controlling anger, not using vulgar speech, arguing, or lying etc. He or she would also increase their prayers and do more acts of charity. On this subject, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) said: “If one does not abandon falsehood in words and deeds, Allah has no need for his abandoning of food and drink.”<sup>9</sup>

Another example of worship in Islam, where the presence or absence of *taqwah* can be ascertained, is in the five daily prayers. There are very few acceptable reasons for missing these prayers. When a professed Muslim abandons or consciously neglects the five daily prayers, they are displaying an obvious lack of *taqwah*, which weakens their faith and spiritual resiliency. Out of the five “pillars” of Islam, these two acts of worship (fasting and prayer) can be considered as foundational in the establishment and maintenance of one’s spiritual stamina, particularly during difficult or crisis circumstances. But to ensure spiritual resiliency, another foundational item must be present in the individual. This item is known as *sabr*.

### **The Meaning of Sabr in Islam**

Another characteristic necessary for the Muslim’s spiritual resiliency, found in the Qur’anic text, is embodied in the Arabic word *sabr*. *Sabr* has been translated as *extreme patience, perseverance, and*

*diligence in the most difficult situations. Another definition is, “to maintain patience, composure, equanimity, self-control and endurance in the face of difficulties, hardships, stress or inconveniences that may come in living and doing things in the way Prescribed by Allah.”*<sup>10</sup>

Both *taqwah* and *sabr* enable the Muslim /Believer to not only maintain hope in this world (and in the next), but also to recognize difficult, life-altering events as tests from Allah (God). In most faith-traditions, it is accepted as an aspect of faith to perceive certain life-changing circumstances as “God’s Will.” This “providential” approach to life’s circumstances and events is often viewed by Muslims as one of the core beliefs of Islam. Within Islam’s six Articles of Faith, the 5th Article is “to believe in Destiny and Divine Decree.” This Article of Faith is affirmed through one of the more commonly known sayings of Islam, “InshaAllah,” or translated as “God willing” or “if it pleases God.” The phrase stems from the Qur’anic verse: **“Nor say of anything, I will be sure to do so and so tomorrow without first saying, if God wills.”**<sup>11</sup> Muslims are cautioned to expect difficulties and trials as tests from Almighty God, in order to distinguish those who are patient (have *sabr* and *taqwah*) from those who will be prone to fall into despair and separate themselves from God.

To this point the Qur’an states: **“Do men think they will be left alone on merely saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false.”**(29:2-3)<sup>12</sup>

Mere belief or a verbal affirmation of faith, from the Islamic context, is simply not enough. One must be willing, ready to accept positive transformation before such transformation can begin to take place.

The human being was not created to *live* in a state of hopelessness and despair; yet we are equipped to deal with hopelessness and despair. There are times when circumstances may challenge the individual to be more reticent in utilizing one or more of the many faculties or resources given to him/her by God. Again the Qur’an states: **“No calamity of any kind can occur, except by the will of Allah; and if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (to the right direction): for Allah knows all things.”** (64:12)<sup>13</sup> Even though God ultimately decides the course of all within His Creation, via His established laws. He

(God) has given us (human beings) this special ability to reason, and the freedom to make choices. Inevitably this makes us responsible for this same freedom and we sometimes have to make what ends up being difficult choices. When such difficulty is accompanied by stress, despair, and hopelessness, it is here that one knows the degree to which he/she possesses *taqwah* and *sabr*. In



**During the month of Ramadan in 2007, CH (LTC) Gary Hensley, CJTF 101 command chaplain, joined CH Muhammad and SSG Jennifer Fey (front center) and the Muslim community during the annual celebration of Lail-tul-Qadr (The Night of Power) at a local mosque on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.**

this constant struggle for spiritual wholeness we are at times required to make sense out of senseless situations. A holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, in his renowned book *Man's Search for Meaning*, indicates that: "The greatest task for any person is to find meaning in his or her own life." He identified three sources of such meaning; in work; in love; and in courage during difficult times.<sup>14</sup> The latter is one of the primary focuses of this article. Of the seven Army Values, it is Personal Courage that enables the Soldier to remain resolute even when experiencing the most difficult conditions.

Major General Vincent Brooks, currently serving as commander of the 1st Infantry Division, recently was quoted as saying regarding Spiritual Fitness, "As warriors, Soldiers often face ethical and moral issues that challenge their spirits, and it is 'spirit' that helps a Soldier go back out on the battlefield while mourning the loss of a buddy."<sup>15</sup>

Those individuals that consistently work to establish the qualities of *taqwah* and *sabr* in their lives; find in the process, that they're also establishing meaning for their lives. Adversity often aides in bringing out these qualities in the life of the "believer." For the Muslim, a fourth source of meaning could be added to Frankl's premise that could be preparation and hope for, the best, in the life hereafter. This is another of the core beliefs in Islam that is actions in this current life are only precursor to the life hereafter. Thus the Muslim with *taqwah* and *sabr* strives to remain conscious of not disobeying his Lord's established guidance, but ultimately fears His displeasure and seeks to earn His reward of paradise not His punishment in the life hereafter.

The life long effort it takes to establish this sense of piety becomes the foundation from which the Muslim consistently holds himself responsible and accountable to His Creator, thus enabling him/her over time to become more spiritually resilient. Resilience therefore, entails more than merely surviving, getting through, or escaping or nearly escaping a harrowing ordeal. "Survivors are not necessarily resilient; some become trapped in a position as victim, nursing their wounds and blocked from growth by anger and blame."<sup>16</sup>

In contrast, the qualities of resilience enable people to heal from painful wounds (physical, mental, spiritual) take charge of their lives, and often go on to live fully productive lives. Ultimately, resilience is established through a process, that is, it requires the individual to be open to the reframing of past experiences, as well as interdependence on others; as well as a willingness to be a part of a supportive and nurturing community environment.<sup>17</sup>

When correctly used, this process of reframing can be a very useful clinical/pastoral tool in assisting in this positive transformation process. It's often very useful when answers are sought for the inexplicable, i.e. why did I survive and not my buddy.

### **Historic and Personal Accounts of Spiritual Resiliency**

Historically, the earliest account of Muslims living in the U.S. was African slaves during the Transatlantic Slave trade. "The Atlantic Slave Trade brought millions of African slaves to the New World, though historians disagree on the exact number of those who landed in the New World. But nonetheless... a conservative figure of 10 million slaves came across its middle passage."<sup>18</sup> According to Alan Austin, a noted African-American historian, "At least 10 percent of the slaves who arrived in the U.S. were Muslims."<sup>19</sup> Due to the institution of slavery, slaves were hard-pressed to maintain any vestiges of their original culture, family traditions, and history. This made it extremely difficult for African Muslim slaves to maintain any of their established Islamic identity. However, as was previously stated, when practiced as an aspect of faith, the characteristics of *taqwah* and *sabr* is chiefly what enables the believing person to not only persevere and remain steadfast, but ultimately trust in God's Providence in every situation. There were several examples of this type of perseverance during this period of American history. "Amongst these accounts of Muslim slaves is the story of Ayub Ibn Sulayman Diallo, also known as Job Ben

Solomon, originally a Prince from modern day Guinea.<sup>20</sup> Ben Solomon was confronted with the challenges of functioning in an alien environment without the needed cultural institutions critical in the renewal or the resiliency process. Douglas Grant indicates in his book, *The Fortunate Slave*, that Job insisted on offering his five daily prayers, and through his dedication to regular study of the Qur'an, he was able to maintain the entire Qur'an by memory.<sup>21</sup> It was this type of commitment to spiritual discipline that enabled many slaves to not only survive the horrors of slavery, but most importantly to maintain their human dignity in the process.

There were others that remained equally as spiritually resilient during this period. Some of the names that time has not erased are: Omar ibn Sayyid, Fayetteville, N.C.; Yorro Mahmoud (aka Yarrow Mamouth), Georgetown, and Abdur Rahman, whose life story is chronicled in Terry Afford's *A Prince Among Slaves*. Many were believed to be directly responsible for the written and oral traditions that were passed along through the ages, and thus contributing to African-American Muslims being the vast majority of the Muslim-American population.

From a personal account, I recall while serving as an enlisted Soldier, from 1982-1985, the many challenges that Muslim Soldiers had to face, i.e., information on the Islamic religion was limited, places for worship were relatively nonexistent and there were no Muslim chaplains, as well as very few Muslim Lay Leaders. Yet, whenever we could, we prayed in the most available locations, usually off post, unless we worshipped with other Muslim officers here for training from various parts of the Muslim world. As Muslim American Soldiers, we've been as determined as our early Muslim ancestors that survived the vestiges of slavery. Serving as a chaplain on active duty the past 15 years, has enabled me by God's Grace, the opportunity and privilege to accomplish in the area of religious accommodations for Muslim Soldiers. Included are: multi-faith worship facilities (in some locations distinct places for Islamic worship); availability of Qur'ans and other Islamic literature; prayer rugs; prayer caps; and hijabs (women's scarves as of now used for prayer only). Although more is still to be done in this area, much progress has been made since my early days as an enlisted Soldier. Deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have enabled me to know the importance of spiritual resiliency in a war zone. I thank God that He continues to allow me to use the skills and talents He's blessed me with in order to make a difference in the lives of Soldiers from all faith backgrounds, as well as those without any profession of faith. Therefore, the Muslim Soldier's spiritual needs are virtually no different than others, thus enabling him/her to potentially remain spiritually resilient in most any situation they may be confronted with.

For Soldiers who've experienced one or more incidents of combat-related trauma, particularly those who've experienced multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, most certainly their emotional and spiritual resources continue to be challenged. Despite these challenges, it has been affirmed in both the mental health profession, as well as in our profession of ministry and pastoral care, those individuals that possess and practice their faith, and strive for consistency, as well as maintain contact with their faith community, tend to function better during times of crisis, uncertainty, or during serious life-changing events.

I'll conclude with a Qur'anic verse that speaks very well to those who consistently strive to possess these qualities of *taqwah* and *sabr*:

***“Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians any who believe in Allah (God) and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord, on them will be no fear, nor will they grieve.”(2:62)***<sup>22</sup>

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Webster, Merriam, Dictionary and Thesaurus, pg. 772

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, pg. 688

<sup>3</sup>Walsh, Froma, “Strengthening Family Resilience,” pg. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Direction*, page. xv

<sup>5</sup>Rodriquez, Maurice, "Filling the Canteen of Spiritual Resilience," *Ezine Articles*, <http://ezinearticles.com> , 8/24/2009, page 1

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, page 1

<sup>7</sup>Ali, Abdullah Yusef, "The Meaning of The Qur'an," CH. 2: 2, pg. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Hamid, Abdul-Wahid, "Islam The Natural Way," page 46

<sup>9</sup>Dodge, Christine Huda, "Everything Understanding Islam Book," pg. 76

<sup>10</sup>Islamic Forum, Basics of Islam, [www.islamcity.com](http://www.islamcity.com) : posted 13 May 2006.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, CH. 18: 23-24, pg. 715

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, CH 29: 2-3, pg. 987

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, CH 64: 11, pg 1479

<sup>14</sup>Frankl, Viktor, *Man's Search For Meaning*, pg. x

<sup>15</sup>Stairett, Amanda, *Killeen Daily Herald*, 10 December 2008.

<sup>16</sup>Walsh, Froma, "Strengthening Family Resilience," pg. 4.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, pg 22

<sup>18</sup>Nyang, S. Sulayman, *Islam in the U.S. of America*, page 58.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, pg. 58

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, page 59

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, page 59

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, CH 2: 62, pg. 33.

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*Chaplain (LTC) Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad was affirmed into the U.S. Army as the first Islamic chaplain in the U.S. Armed Forces at the Pentagon on Dec. 3, 1993. He is currently assigned to the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, S.C., as the Course Developer and Analyst for the Brigade Chaplain and Chaplain Captain Career Course (C4) courses.*



# Spiritual Resiliency in the Life of a Chaplain's Spouse

*By Mrs. Nancy J. Wheatley*

During my husband's first deployment, I was part of a support group for the spouses of deployed Soldiers. One week, the group's organizer asked me to present a workshop on the topic of "How an intentional walk with God can help one through deployment" – in other words, spiritual resilience. It was early in the war, deployments were a new thing and fear was rampant among the members of the group. I talked for the better part of an hour about the spiritual disciplines; my daily quiet time, my prayer life, and the peace I'd found in surrender. I thought it was a pretty thorough and impassioned speech, and by the time I was finished I had even inspired myself. It was great.

I asked if there were any questions. One of the young wives raised her hand. In a flood of frustration she asked: "But what do you actually do? When the baby is crying again and you're afraid to go into his room because there's a very real possibility that you'll hurt him, when you're lonely and scared and you don't know if you'll ever see your husband again and you don't know if you could live through that, what do you do? Are you trying to tell me that having a quiet time and a prayer life and reading the Bible is really going to help when it's 3 a.m. and I think I may be losing my mind?"

That question wasn't what I expected. As I looked around the group, it was clear that many others were in agreement with this young woman's question. They wanted real answers that would give them strength and resilience in the darkest days of their lives, but they were not convinced that cultivating a relationship with the living God would provide those answers.

I don't know whether anything I said in that talk made a lasting impression on anyone, but that young woman's question certainly made a lasting impression on me. I still work in women's ministry, and I have devoted a lot of the last six years to trying to lead women to the well of strength and healing that is available to them through a relationship with God. In the rest of this article, I would like to share some of the practices that I have found to be a reliable source of spiritual resilience. They have brought renewal and healing when I needed them most and have given me strength to continue through difficult days.

To my non-denominational Christian ears, the term "spiritual resilience" implies that the "ability to recover strength, spirits, etc. quickly"<sup>1</sup> comes from a relationship with the living God, through Christ Jesus, made possible by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. It makes sense, then, that the healthier and more vitally alive that relationship is, the more resilience it will provide. Over the years of my walk as a Christian, I have found a rich, regular devotional life to be non-negotiable. For me, the foundations of spiritual resilience are daily time in God's Word and prayer that starts in the morning and continues throughout the day. Building upon this foundation, here are some other things that have become essentials to my spiritual well-being:

**Worship** – Worship is one of the most life-giving things I know. The psalmist, King David, sang, "Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together."<sup>2</sup> Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines it this way: "Chiefly and eminently, the act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being; or the reverence and homage paid to him in religious exercises, consisting in adoration, confession, prayer, thanksgiving and the like."<sup>3</sup> This may or may not take place in a church building.

It is tempting, when I am burdened by many problems, to spend my quiet time with God rehearsing those problems and desperately seeking answers. In worship, I choose instead to minimize those problems

in the same way that I minimize a window when I'm working on my computer. I then open a new window in which I focus on the character and power of my Savior. When I worship, I exalt His name above my circumstances and remember who He is. I consider His blessings and remind my soul of how good He has been to me. In other words, I fill my mind and heart with truth and make the conscious decision to live from that truth.

One of the most helpful things I've learned about worship is explained in Gary Thomas' insightful book, *Sacred Pathways*. Thomas explains that, just as we each have preferred ways of giving and receiving love (as in *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman), so we each have preferred ways of worshipping God. Thomas outlines a broad spectrum of nine different approaches to worship. He asserts that if we want to be spiritually healthy, we should be aware of our "spiritual temperaments" and structure our lives to allow for regular, personally meaningful worship. I scored most strongly as an ascetic, which by Thomas' definition is one whose preferred style of worship is to simply be alone with God. This has been a crucial piece of self-knowledge for me. Although I can worship in many ways, I know that when I desperately need "face time" with the Lover of my soul, being alone with Him is what I crave.

During this deployment, I went through a particularly dry time. I'm a busy mom with three boys and plenty of commitments, so it's not unusual for me to be tired. But my mother's unexpected death early in the deployment and the constant needs of a deployment-saturated community took a toll. I suddenly found myself confronting warning signs: irritability, sleeplessness, reduced productivity and exhaustion. I felt brittle and empty.

I sought an opportunity for solitude. Alone, I made a list of all of my frustrations and the many things I felt I was failing at. I offered that list up to God and said, "Lord, here is where I am today. Help me." And then I set that list aside and began to worship the Lord. I was alone in my house, so I sang to Him, danced to Him, read His word aloud and reminded myself of its truth. I put my focus completely on God, thanked Him for His incredible grace to me and praised Him for His goodness. I worshipped until my children came home. I didn't have any answers yet, but my eyes were on Him and my list looked smaller than the God I was worshipping. I felt refreshed.

The next day, during my quiet time, I was again drawn to worship. This time, I took out a list of Biblical names of God. I began to go through the list of His names, pausing to thank and celebrate Him every time one of those names answered a need. The one that hit home on this occasion was "El Shaddai," the All-Sufficient One. As I worshipped, the Holy Spirit spoke to me of His sufficiency over every circumstance, every need, everything I thought I was failing at. I went back to my list and wrote "El Shaddai" in bold letters over each entry as a declaration of His supremacy over it. In that moment, I experienced what Bill Johnson describes this way: "...as we agree with the *revelation* of who He is, the *reality* of who He is starts to flow into our lives and transform us into His likeness. All fruitfulness in our lives flows from this place of intimacy with the Lord."<sup>4</sup> I left the room filled with new energy and new hope to face the demands that were awaiting me. I had never forgotten that my God loved me and was mighty, but now I had spent time in His presence and that truth was real to me once again, despite the fact that my circumstances had not changed.

**Sabbath Rest** -- One of the answers that came out of my time of worship was an awareness of my need for planned, regular rest. The fourth commandment is the only one that I seem to be able to rationalize breaking. I have always thought of going to church as the appropriate way to keep the Sabbath holy, but the commandment in Exodus 20:8-11 does not mention attending worship services. It speaks exclusively of rest. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth... and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."<sup>5</sup>

Chaplain (COL) Carl Young preached an excellent sermon several years ago at the Fort McPherson,

Ga., chapel in which he stated that to obey the commandments is an outward sign of an inward trust; that if we trust God to be who He says He is, then we will obey His word and trust Him with the outcome. I realized that if God commanded a Sabbath rest, then for me to ignore that command because I had too much to do indicated: 1) that I did not trust God to be true to His word and take care of the consequences of my obedience; and 2) that, in practicality, I was placing a higher priority on my activities than on obedience to God. Time for an attitude adjustment. I began to schedule a time of Sabbath rest on the weekends. It wasn't always easy; Cub Scouts, Family Readiness Group meetings and my sons' needs encroached. But I was amazed at how eagerly I began to look forward to my island of time on weekends when I could take a nap, read a book, or spend time in God's word just for the sheer joy of it. It nourished my soul. I realized over time that, for me, those Sabbath oases were most renewing when I intentionally committed them to the Lord and reserved them for restful activities rather than recreation.

It became clear to me that my refusal to rest had been a form of pride. It might have been the "indispensability complex" I've been accused of having, or perhaps I had taken the "Army Strong" motto a little too much to heart. Gary Thomas says: "The problem is that some of us try to take a shortcut and fulfill God's call without receiving God's nourishment. Disaster lies down those roads."<sup>6</sup> An approach much more grounded in reality is humility that cries, "God, I need You desperately and I cannot do this without You. I will rest, I will allow You to fill me with Yourself because of my own self I can do nothing." With that attitude I am able to face the challenges that come, relying wholly on the strength my God provides. Sabbath rest, viewed not as a legalistic observance but as a gift of grace, becomes a divine source of renewal.

**Godly friendship** -- Being a chaplain's spouse is sometimes a lonely place. The expectations and needs of others can weigh heavy, and our walk of faith is lived out in an extremely public way. While I absolutely believe in being real and transparent, there is a delicate balance between transparency and airing my struggles so publicly that I risk undermining the gospel I profess. When people in our community look at my life, I want them to see someone whose God is real and whose relationship with Him is genuine, but sometimes I need a safe place to be weak and let others strengthen me. I had spent many years as a chaplain's spouse and weathered some really lonely seasons before I discovered the power of having at least one real friend with whom I can be completely transparent. It was a new experience for me to be able to speak the doubts, fears and frustrations I never thought I'd say out loud. The Lord gave me a friend who is strong in her own faith and mature enough to know that everyone struggles sometimes. I can go to her with anything and she does not question my faith or my sanity. She just listens, gives wise counsel, tells me the truth when I'm wrong, and lifts me up in prayer. I do the same for her. We have found that there is healing in honesty and great power in knowing that someone is praying for you in your areas of greatest weakness. I have found this kind of accountability and personal support invaluable in providing spiritual resilience; there is strength in knowing that you are not alone. In my opinion, every person in a position of spiritual leadership needs a friend like that. If you don't have one, ask God for one.

**Perspective** -- There are two aspects in which I have found proper perspective vital to spiritual resilience.

The first aspect arises from a self-centered sense of responsibility. Being in the position of taking care of others' needs can be so daunting. It's easy to get caught in the traps of perfectionism or self-doubt, both of which are crippling. I recently heard Brian Clay, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist in the decathlon, relate his experience during the Olympic trials. He felt that God had brought him to this point, but he was not doing well in the trials and thought he was about to let God down. He turned to God in prayer. He felt the Lord reassuring him that everything was under His control. This was what the Holy Spirit whispered to Brian's heart: "It doesn't need to be perfect. You don't need to be perfect. Just give Me your best, and I'll

make it good enough.” Brian proceeded to get scores that were not outstanding, but were good enough to send him to the Olympics, where he won the gold. He gives all glory to God for his victory.<sup>7</sup>

I love the reminder that all I have to give to my heavenly Father is my best. This is His ministry, and the responsibility for its effectiveness rests on His shoulders, not mine. What I offer will never be perfect, but it doesn’t need to be. I will do what I can, and go forward with the strong assurance that in the hands of the Master, it will be good enough.

The second aspect in which I find perspective necessary to spiritual resilience is the need to keep the big picture in view. It has to do with the power of purpose. I believe that both my God and my nation are working in the world toward redemptive and noble ends, and I have the amazing privilege of serving both. My part to play may be small, but it matters in both time and eternity. Holding fast to that ideal breathes new resolve into my spirit. When I see God using my words to minister to others, or experience one of those “divine appointments” in which it is clear that His unseen hand is at work, it reminds me that I am where I am because it somehow pleased Him to put me here. A song by the Canadian Christian band “*downhere*” captures my feelings perfectly: “Here I am, Lord, send me. Somehow my story is a part of Your plan; here I am.”<sup>8</sup> Holding that truth before me keeps me getting up in the morning, asking God to fill me with Himself. There’s work to be done.

In conclusion, I don’t believe that there is anything more crucial to the search for resiliency than a vibrant relationship with God. The Soldiers and families to whom we minister deserve to see living examples of this. My prayer for our Army chaplaincy is that every person in a position of spiritual leadership would so pursue a vital relationship with the God of creation that we would glow with true resiliency and be able to offer solid answers to an Army community that is crying out for something that works.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Webster’s New World Dictionary, Simon & Schuster, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Psalm 34:3, NASB.

<sup>3</sup><http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/word/worship>

<sup>4</sup>Johnson, Bill, *Strengthen Yourself in the Lord*, Destiny Image Publishers, 2007, p.36.

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 20:8-11, NASB.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas, Gary, *Sacred Pathways*, Zondervan, 1996, p.220.

<sup>7</sup>[www.enehope.org](http://www.enehope.org), Video of Brian Clay’s testimony.

<sup>8</sup>Germain/Martel, “Here I Am,” Centricity Music Publishing, 2008.



*Nancy Wheatley has been a chaplain’s wife for more than 21 years. She is presently serving as the Resource Coordinator for Protestant Women of the Chapel International. Her husband, CH (LTC) Tom Wheatley is deployed to Iraq as the chaplain for the 25th Infantry Division.*

# Spiritual Resilience from the Foxhole

*By SGM Marion Lemon*

## **What is spiritual resilience?**

Spiritual resilience is “the ability to renew, recover, or adjust ones spirit, mind, body, soul, and strength quickly.” (See CH (COL) Mike Dugal’s keynote article at the beginning of this volume). Just as one works to maintain the body with exercise, so should each Soldier maintain his or her spiritual self. This is what we did in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## **Who needs spiritual resilience?**

As V Corps from Heidelberg, Germany, made plans to move to Kuwait and then on to Baghdad in Operation Iraqi Freedom, my number one priority was spiritual resilience for the Soldiers, my chaplain/ battle buddy, then CH (COL) Douglas Carver, and myself. Planning and implementing a spiritual resiliency plan was crucial for me from the beginning.

What was true for Chaplain Carver and me was true for our senior commander and his command sergeant major as well. Lieutenant General William S. Wallace served as the V Corps commander during OIF and made his fourth star, going on to retire after a successful tour as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). I once heard LTG Wallace telling Chaplain Carver, “If I miss worship services you are responsible for my spiritual need. You will be required to give me a one-on-one service because my spiritual life is important and that is what is going to sustain me during the war.”

At the time, the V Corps Command Sergeant Major was Kenneth O. Preston, who is now the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army. Sergeant Major of the Army Preston stated, “One suicide is one too many! I know that our Unit Ministry Teams can help us to reduce our suicide rate.” To do this, chaplain assistants must be rooted in some type of faith or belief in order to address this need that often rises to the surface in Soldier suffering under the strain of repeated combat tours. Leaders and Soldiers will be coming to see the chaplain and his assistant when bullets are flying, so be prepared now spiritually in order to comfort them in their time of need.

And what is true for UMT leaders and senior command leaders is true for Soldiers too. Many Soldiers gave letters, cards, and notes to Chaplain Carver and myself before the war started. These individuals did not know if they were going to make it back home to their loved ones after the war. These actions highlighted a spiritual need. This need is evident in chaplains, chaplain assistants, and the Soldiers themselves. It is imperative for all Soldier’s to have a healthy spirit in order to maintain their spiritual resilience.

Soldiers’ inner resources are often based on their religious and spiritual values. In combat, Soldiers show more interest in their religious beliefs. When religious and spiritual values are challenged during the chaos of combat, Soldiers may lose sight of the inner resources that sustain them. The Soldiers then become targets of fear, despair, hopelessness, and eventually, battle fatigue casualties. They are also at risk for committing misconduct stress behaviors.

## **What are the critical elements in spiritual resilience?**

Knowledge is the cornerstone of spiritual resilience. Knowledge is power. The Chaplain Corps must educate the army, the leaders, and Soldiers about spiritual resiliency. The whole Chaplaincy team must be spiritually educated in order to accomplish this task. Knowledge broadens awareness

and highlights reality. Knowledge gained through faith, wisdom, awareness, experiences, research, thoughts, and observations, heightens one's spirituality. Knowledge can help to make paradigm shifting of the spirit, mind, soul, and body possible. Everyone functions best when spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy.

Another factor to maintain one's spiritual resilience is trust. Trust doesn't come from saying "Trust me." Trust is earned, just like respect. Building trust is another spiritual exercise. Trust is built through communication, rapport, the example we set, listening and follow through.

Since 2009 is being celebrated Army-wide as the Year of the NCO, I would like to share a story about a NCO and trust. In May 2004, this NCO was initially diagnosed with pneumonia. Later, it was diagnosed as an E.coli infection. The infection caused him to go into a coma with a fever for three weeks. He underwent two surgical procedures. Although the surgeries were successful, his body still maintained a fever of about 106 degrees. The fever could not be controlled or reduced. His mother was called in and was informed he had only a few days to live and there was nothing else they could do. His mother was very adamant that there was some something she could do. She anointed and prayed him down. After the third day, the fever broke. Sergeant First Class Johnnie Ebron and his mother trusted in the Lord. Ebron is currently serving as a Training NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

### **How do you develop and maintain spiritual resilience?**

The UMT is the primary resource available to Soldiers experiencing these dilemmas and seeking to refocus their spiritual values. Before all UMTs cross the "Line of Departure" into Iraq, they are staged at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Over the past four years stationed at Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command, I have had the opportunity with CH (COL) Larry Goodwill, CH (COL) Larry Adams-Thompson and CH (COL) Craig Wiley to pray and talk with many UMTs before they departed into Iraq. We share our knowledge and experience about what's going to sustain you during this deployment, that physical fitness is good and necessary, but it's your spiritual fitness that's going to sustain you for this mission.

### **What kind of resilience training is available now?**

Resilience training is now part of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. It focuses on the five dimensions of strength: emotional, social, family, physical, and spiritual. Knowledge is a key part of spiritual fitness, and therefore is imperative to overcoming the stresses of war. Most importantly, the knowledge that everyone has innate resilience-ground practices in optimism and possibility, essential components in building motivation. Not only does this knowledge help prevent burnout of the UMT from working with seriously troubled Soldiers; it provides one of the major protective factors and positive expectations that, when internalized by Soldiers, motivates and enables them to overcome risks and adversity.

### **What is the UMT's responsibility for each other's spiritual resilience training?**

The chaplain assistant must be aware and educated on developing and maintaining spiritual resilience. It's also the chaplain's responsibility to train, educate and mentor his or her assistant. When UMTs deploy, I emphasize to the chaplain that it is imperative that you take GREAT care of your assistant. Your assistant makes up 50 percent of your team. You are responsible for his or her spiritual need. Your assistant plays a vital role in helping you access the spiritual resilience of your

Soldiers in the unit.

The Book of Psalms has some great knowledge about wisdom to share with leaders and Soldiers:

Psalm 23 -- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. **2** He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. **3** He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. **4** Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. **5** Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. **6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 91 -- He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. **2**I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. **3**Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. **4**He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. **5**Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; **6**Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. **7**A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. **8**Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. **9**Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; **10**There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. **11**For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12**They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. **13**Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. **14**Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. **15**He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. **16**With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Reading such books of Scripture is an essential form of spiritual exercise.

Pastor Stu Weber, a former Green Beret, speaks very profoundly about the spirit in his book, "Spirit Warriors." In April 2007, CH (COL) Larry Adams-Thompson, Stu Weber and I visited Kuwait and Afghanistan. Weber came over to minister to the caregivers and talk with commanders, leaders and Soldiers about their spiritual battles. Pastor Weber reveals the crucial spiritual battles that all Christians and Soldiers face constantly, whether or not they are aware of them. "Somehow we have come to mistakenly associate spiritual warfare with charismatic personalities strutting across brightly lit platforms...whuppin' up on evil spirits", he said. "But spiritual warfare is so much more than a show."

### **Ultimately, whose responsibility is spiritual resilience?**

Finally, spiritual resilience is everyone's responsibility. Every leader, officer, NCO, civilian and spouse is responsible for their Soldier's spiritual resilience. It's not just our Sergeants' responsibility for spiritual resilience. Spiritual resilience should be implemented at every level of Army schooling.

There are many resiliency self-tests online that you can take and share with your commanders and Soldiers. I challenge you all to take the tests and find out where you are with your resiliency. In

closing, as General George C. Marshall stated, “The Soldier’s heart, the Soldier’s spirit and the Soldier’s soul are everything. Unless the Soldier’s soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself, his commander and his country in the end.”

Remember, no one else in the Army does what we do. As chaplains and chaplain assistants, we save Soldier’s souls. Luke 12:48 reads, “Remember, to whom much is given, much is expected. And Joshua 1:9 reads, “Be strong and of good courage, so do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”



*SGM Marion Lemon serves as the Command Chaplain Sergeant Major for U.S. Army Central Command, Fort McPherson, Ga. He is a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and has completed more than 30 trips to the Middle East. He holds a Masters in Management and Human Resources.*



# A Jewish Perspective on Spiritual Resilience

By Chaplain (CPT) Henry C. Soussan

One of the greatest challenges chaplains face is spiritual preparedness. Spiritual preparedness involves the mental, attitudinal and “higher self” that we face when we become members of the Armed Forces – with all the existential, life-and-death, defensive and offensive components that this commitment entails. Make no mistake about it, the spiritual state of our fighting forces, our corps and our individual selves is as important as our physical condition if we want to survive and thrive despite these challenges. It is in the realm of spiritual resilience that the outcome of any battle may be determined – something that the sheer number of Soldiers returning to civilian life and displaying so many symptoms of PTSD and burnout will attest.

It is imperative that we, as spiritual caregivers, maintain a high degree of spiritual resilience. Our spiritual resilience is especially important whenever we are deployed and separated from our own spiritual sources of strength, such as our families and our extended faith communities. The natural question might therefore be: Where do we, then, turn to for strength? As in all such reflections, there is no simple, one-size-fits-all answer. However, I can share with you some classical biblical and rabbinic sources that I turn to – along with Jews throughout the ages – for help.

First, a few words about terminology are helpful. A helpful definition of spiritual resilience is given by philosopher Craig Stephen Titus, describing it as “the capacity, when faced with hardship and difficulty, to *cope actively* using religious resources, to resist the destruction of one’s spiritual competency, and to construct something positive in line with larger theological goals.”<sup>21</sup> This act – this capacity to “cope actively” is a dynamic process. For me, it has several components consisting of spiritual discipline, the Jewish experience and God’s presence.

## Spiritual Discipline

The foremost prerequisite of any spiritually healthy person is discipline – a quality that is familiar to those of us in the military. Theologian Henri Nouwen says it best when he maintains that “a spiritual life cannot be formed without discipline, practice and accountability.”<sup>22</sup>

In the Jewish tradition, spiritual discipline is primarily nurtured through three things: prayer, study and the fulfillment of the commandments. In particular, I suggest that it is the study of Jewish history, traditionally seen as being woven with divine intention, which is an integral component to the building of a resilient spirit.

**“I bless you, O Lord as long as I live; in your Name I lift up my hands in petition.” (Psalm 63:5)**

For the rabbis who wrote the Talmud during the early centuries of the common era, this Psalm, which dates from the time of King David, forms the basis for all Jewish prayer. A regulated prayer schedule is the very first and foremost building block of any form of spirituality and gives us the strength to prepare and fortify us against adversity.

Jewish tradition requires that we pray three times a day in addition to the blessings we make over every piece of food or beverage we consume. In addition, we are instructed to recite a blessing when observing natural phenomena, like rainbows, thunder and lightning and even upon donning a new garment. In this connection, it is particularly noteworthy that Jews are also given a formal Benediction which we recite whenever we hear bad news, as if to prepare us for those times when life is difficult.

While not a prerequisite for prayers efficacy, even the intention with which one recites a prayer plays a role. While the rabbis tell us that the goal is to speak every prayer with *kavanah*, or sacred intention, the obligation to actually carry out structured prayer is what is important. It is the discipline – not the mindset – of praising God an obligatory 100 times a day that is important. It is this strict prayer routine which has the effect of carrying out a

continuous conversation with God from morning to evening that helps fortify us and strengthen us. It is a reminder that God is never far away, but inherent in the thanks we give for every aspect of our lives.

Indeed, for Jews who fulfill the commandment of daily prayer, it's not unusual to thank God for life itself. Discipline is something that can be seen in the prayer we say every morning after reciting – *in toto* – the biblical story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac. According to rabbinic tradition, and as monumental as this story is as the ultimate test of one's faith in God and a higher purpose, this was just the culmination of no fewer than 10 tests that Abraham had to undergo as a demonstration of his faith and spiritual resilience.

Abraham's narrative is crucial in understanding Jewish willingness to confront hardship and sacrifice in the defense of one's convictions. The theme of being tested only as much as one is able to bear, and indeed the entire notion of being simultaneously "tried" and "rescued" by God, has been revisited countless times during the darkest hours of persecution and hardship. It has been instrumental in restoring faith and resiliency throughout the ages and occupies a prominent place in the religious poetry of the Middle Ages. Indeed, for the Jewish people, it is almost as if the very act of remembering Abraham's bravery imbues us with some of his attributes, thereby shoring up an innate source of spiritual resilience within us. Combine this with the notion that previous generations of our people, many of whose tribulations we can only imagine, sought strength in this story and somehow the well-rehearsed antidote to fear becomes our own.

**“Through Torah Study, the faithful is guaranteed sound wisdom, insight and strength as it is written: I have counsel and sound wisdom, I have insight and I have strength (Prov. 8:14).”<sup>3</sup>**

While the rabbis regard prayer as the vehicle by which the human being talks to God, the study of the Holy Scriptures is understood as the means by which God talks back to us. If prayer is the way that we petition God, then Torah study is the way he answers. Only their combined pursuit can lead to true dialogue.

In the Jewish tradition, it is the Talmudic sage Shammai who famously stated: “Set aside a fixed time for Torah study.”<sup>4</sup> Like exercise and physical fitness, spiritual fitness requires a routine. According to a Talmudic tradition, when a man is brought to his Maker to give an accounting of his life, one of the first questions he will be asked is: “Did you set aside time for daily Torah study?”<sup>5</sup>

In other words, “Did you take time out to fortify yourself by listening to God's instruction, wisdom and knowledge?”

According to the above dictum, it is the study of the law which gives strength and the ability to overcome adversity. By connecting with the wisdom of the ages – a wisdom which encompasses every life-and-death experience known such that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecc.1:9) – we are reassured that no matter what we are experiencing, it has been experienced before and that somehow, somewhere, perhaps by digging just a bit deeper, we will find a relevant strand that will see us through our struggle. Indeed, study is often referred to as a “shield” and a protection against suffering danger and in life's general adversities.<sup>6</sup>

Rabbis consider study, which is both the rational and spiritual grappling with all facets of one's current struggle in the framework of what we have faced in our history, to be so important that some schools of Jewish thought see it richer, more valuable and more fundamental than prayer itself. It is essential that the spiritual side of each being is being nourished through contemplation and the learning of divine wisdom. In other instances the rabbis considered study to be a “substitute for the Temple Service” and equal to all other commandments, because it leads to a greater understanding of our relationship with God.<sup>7</sup>

During the study of the sacred writings, “the text itself becomes a locus of religious experience. . . and studying it is thus tantamount to meeting God; it is a moment of religious intimacy.”<sup>8</sup>

On a practical level, then, study is both a cognitive, critical and spiritual act. Through it we sharpen our minds, learn how to analyze a biblical or a Talmudic text, and to search it out for meaning and ultimate significance. These are strategic tools which, even on the most basic levels and whether on the battlefield or negotiating the vicissitudes of life, are critical for finding one's way spiritually.

***“God wished to confer merit upon the Jewish people... Therefore He gave them Torah and Commandments***

*in abundance.”*

Perhaps one of the most difficult concepts that even the religious person has to grapple with is the notion that “Everything that God does is for the best.”<sup>10</sup> While this notion may be an unsatisfactory approach for those suffering from trauma and tragedy, behind this ancient dictum lies profound and more overarching questions: Why is this happening to me? Why has my life taken this particular turn? Why am I faced with so many challenges now and where do I fit in the larger scheme of things? What, in short, is my life all about? For those of us engaged in seemingly all-consuming struggles, particularly struggles that involve life and death issues, these questions could not be more basic.

These questions challenge the core of our spiritual resilience. They are the questions that the psychotherapist and Holocaust survivor Victor Frankel faced during his years in the death camps. Said Frankl: “There is nothing in the world. . . that would so effectively help someone to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is meaning in one’s life.” Quoting the German philosopher Nietzsche, Frankl goes on to observe “He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*.... What man actually needs is. . . the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal.”<sup>11</sup>

For the religiously observant, the answer to the *why* should be obvious: because it is God’s will. For the observant Jew, the daily and lifelong fulfillment of the commandments is his “raison d’etre” because God willed it so. For the believer, the answer may simply be the one given by the wise author of Ecclesiastes: “The sum of the matter when all is said and done; Revere God and observe his commandments! For this applies to all mankind.”(Ecc. 12:13)

For the observant Jew, “since the divine will is expressed through the 613 commandments of the Torah, protection and strength comes by fulfilling His word.”<sup>12</sup> For the less religious, and for those who may fail to be touched by a sense of divine purposefulness, the answer is less clear. It may be the very hope that there is a “why” that they may someday discover meaning.

For religious Jews, the intricate and comprehensive laws of religious and personal behavior can be seen as a divine gift to help refine the human character. They are never to be seen as a burden or to be carried out begrudgingly. It is this perpetual fulfillment of the numerous religious commandments in which spiritual content of Judaism can be defined.<sup>13</sup> It is these innumerable laws and regulations which help the practicing Jew to serve God in the most mundane routines of daily life which leads to the realization that the accepted Jewish view of Torah is the way of ‘normal holiness.’

The dietary laws are yet another example to bring about and nurture spiritual discipline. Non-kosher food items are to be shunned only because according to the Jewish understanding, this is God’s will to “refine one’s character,” to discipline the individual and not to indulge without limits.

Prayer, study and the practicing of religious law are tools to transform every day, be it at home or during the hardships of a deployment into a perpetual divine worship. It is the attempt to fill our daily lives with the divine spirit that raises us up and above the hardships of war and trauma.

### **The Jewish Experience**

Viewed in its entire sweep, the biblical and post-biblical history of the Jewish people can also serve as an example of spiritual resilience. Over the course of time, countless tragedies involving unspeakable human suffering befell the Jews. Despite this, generations of historians and outside observers remain staggered with the realization that the Jewish people were able to face adversity, and even death, while still maintaining a strong belief in the justice of a compassionate God. The “miracle of Jewish survival” against all odds is in itself a testimony in “national and personal spiritual resilience,” and the biblical narrative serves as a guideline in overcoming personal adversity and growing through hardship.

Another central motif in the inculcation of spiritual resiliency is the reenactment of the Exodus in Egypt during the Passover Holiday. The liberation from the trauma of bondage marks the culmination and triumph of the

divine plan over what for centuries had seemed like a hopeless situation. It is noteworthy that the Talmud relates how even the Patriarch Jacob was overcome with doubt and hesitation when he learned that he was required to send his youngest son, Benjamin, to Egypt and had to be reminded by the Almighty Himself that all he does is for the best of His creation. Jacob said: “Why have you done evil to me?” (Gen. 43:6). Said Rabbi Levi in the name of Chamah bar Chanina: Jacob never said anything in vain, except here. The Holy One, Blessed is He, said: I am engaged in making his son the ruler of Egypt and he says, “Why have you done evil to me?”<sup>14</sup>

It is ultimately up to Joseph, the victim and target of his brothers’ envy who clearly recognizes God’s intervention and guidance through his personal suffering. He realizes that what had begun as an act of vengeance turns out to be part of the divine plan to save the Israelites and the Egyptians from starvation: “You thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good...to save much people alive.” (Gen. 50:20).

In fact, the ritual of the Passover Seder provides a rich vein of symbolism and ritual that combine to teach the next generation of Jews how to see beyond the slavery of their past, their current predicament and towards a future that promises freedom and ultimate redemption. For me, this broad sweep of history says one thing loud and clear: although at times life may seem unbearable and utterly senseless, that somehow, in a scenario that we cannot yet foresee, deliverance – or at the very least, resolution – will come. It is through the annual reenactment of the Passover that Jews learn that hardship can lead to growth; the unleavened Mazza of slavery and oppression will eventually become the bread of freedom.

At times the Passover Story can be almost brutal in its realism. This realism is something that can be refreshing and provide a healthy dose of reality especially for Soldiers heading off to the battlefield or working in an environment where we are faced with life and death hostility.

Both on a national and a personal level, we are reminded that “in every generation, there are those who rise against us to annihilate us. But the Holy One, Blessed is He, rescues us from their hand.”<sup>15</sup>

Suffering is inevitable. Only by affirming life and fighting against its destruction can we fulfill our true humanity.

I view the Exodus story as the paradigm of Jewish resilience. So central is the traumatic experience of slavery that Jews are obliged to verbally recall the Exodus from Egypt twice daily in prayer, as they remind themselves of the invaluable ethical and moral lessons that accompany this remembrance: “Love the stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Deut.10:19). This is a prime example of how an adverse experience has reversed and is now being utilized to instill compassion and human concern. Without the hardship, the Jewish people would not have grown in the way they did and would not be able to relate to various laws resulting from their time of suffering.

In the context of deployment and wartime experiences, these core Jewish beliefs can be seen as an opportunity for the individual to utilize his experience and testimony of human suffering and carnage into a greater appreciation of the gift of life and health and may thus lead the affected person to grow spiritually. It is the paradigm of slavery and Exodus which serves every Jew as a “guide through trials and traumas, from birth to death.”<sup>16</sup> To learn from the harsh experience of Egypt and turn it into a vehicle for greater spiritual resilience can be seen “as a partnership with the divine to wipe out all forms of slavery and to create a sanctuary on earth.”<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, albeit to a lesser degree, the post-biblical holidays of Hanukkah and Purim both reiterate the theme of a looming national and personal catastrophe. This catastrophe is only averted at the last minute by a caring and loving God, who interceded on behalf of the oppressed.

Finally, the study of modern history and the miraculous survival of the Jewish people throughout the ages, is another powerful testimony to divine protection.

## God's presence

**“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” (Albert Einstein)**

Within Jewish consciousness, the foregoing acts of spirituality, prayer, study and the fulfillment of the law have but one purpose: to infuse our existence with the divine and to lead us to clearly see God's hand in each and every moment of our lives. During war, when Soldiers face death, the chaplain must try to convey this worldview to the Soldier. Many stories of Soldiers in combat, when viewed through the lens of the divine, are “truly” miraculous. It may take a chaplain to uncover the miracle that the Soldier may want to treat as a sheer coincidence. It was almost impossible to deny providential intervention when I happened to be at a most unlikely location at the exact time when there was a need to honor two Jewish Soldiers by performing a fallen comrade ceremony.

Deployment presents a unique opportunity for chaplains to grow spiritually and to help others to find spiritual direction. Personal spiritual discipline is key to the ability to face adversity, not only for the chaplains, but also for the individual Soldier. How spiritual resilience can be nurtured depends on the individual's background and commitment. The strict discipline of the Jewish tradition can be of invaluable help for those facing adversity and hardship. Additionally, it is the Jewish historic experience which testifies that desperation and hopelessness are but temporary stages and the precursors of redemption and salvation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Craig Steven Titus, *Resilience and the Virtue of Fortitude*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 2006, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Henri Nouwen, “Spiritual Direction,” Harper Collins, NY, 2006, p.XV.

<sup>3</sup>Mishna: Sayings of the Fathers, 6:1.

<sup>4</sup>Mishna: Sayings of the Fathers, 1:15.

<sup>5</sup>Babylonian Talmud 31a.

<sup>6</sup>See Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 54a.

<sup>7</sup>See Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 127a.

<sup>8</sup>Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning and Authority*, Cambridge, Mass./London, England: Harvard University Press, 1997, p.8.

<sup>9</sup>Mishna Makkot 3:16.

<sup>10</sup>Babylonian Talmud, Berahot 60b.

<sup>11</sup>Victor Frankl, *Man's search for meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2006, p.104f.

<sup>12</sup>See Jack J. Spiro, “Meaning,” in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*, Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), The Free Press, NY, 1988, p.566.

<sup>13</sup>See Yeshayahu Leibowitz, “Commandments,” in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*, Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), The Free Press, NY, 1988, p.67.

<sup>14</sup>Midrash Genesis Rabba, 91:13.

<sup>15</sup>*The Complete Artscroll Machzor, Pesach*, Mesorah Publications, NY, 1990, p.93.

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Campbell, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, Doubleday, NY, 1988, p.8.

<sup>17</sup>Sybil Wolin in *Spiritual Resources in Families*, ed. Froma Walsh, The Guilford Press, NY 2009 p.116.



*Chaplain (CPT) Henry C. Soussan was born and raised in Western Europe. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Religion from the College of Jewish Studies in Heidelberg, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a Masters degree in Constitutional Law from the University of Heidelberg, Germany and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Sussex, England. He received his orthodox rabbinic ordination in Jerusalem and is endorsed by the “Aleph” Institute. He is currently attending the Chaplain Captain Career Course at USACHCS and is projected to join the faculty of the school in January.*

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# Combat Trauma, Resiliency and Spirituality

*By Chaplain (LTC) Dean Bonura*

The alarming rise in reports of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan has been met by robust efforts in the Department of Defense to mitigate the development of PTSD.<sup>1</sup> One of these efforts includes the examination and use of resiliency-building measures to strengthen our military members to, hopefully, prevent or reduce the incidence of PTSD among those exposed to combat trauma.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of spirituality and the use of spiritual fitness are recognized as important and effective resilience factors in moderating the effects of combat trauma or combat stress among Soldiers. However, defining spirituality or spiritual fitness and identifying the specific elements that contribute to resiliency is both challenging and difficult to determine.

This article examines the nature of combat trauma, discusses resiliency-building measures, and explores the relationship of spirituality to resiliency. The basis for this discussion centers on research conducted by the author in a year-long project, which included a study involving 165 Soldiers who served at least one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan since commencement of combat operations in 2001. Among other topics, the study explored the spiritual dimensions of trauma and the relationship wartime trauma has to resilience. The results of the study indicated that the most significant resilience factor supporting Soldiers during combat was the support of friends, family members and community. Among four other significant factors (example of leaders, support of comrades, teamwork and mission focus), Soldiers identified spirituality as an important supportive factor. With this information, the author draws several conclusions that can be useful to chaplains who provide spirituality-based interventions for Soldiers, especially those who suffer from combat-related trauma or stress.

## **Combat Trauma**

Trauma is defined as a person's response to an event or a series of events that profoundly disrupts a person's ability to understand, predict, or control their life.<sup>3</sup> The extent of the traumatic effect (the degree it negatively or positively affects a person) depends on the individual's perspective of the traumatic event. Combat trauma can manifest itself in the form of a crisis or a persistent stressor that significantly challenges the way a Soldier looks at the world or makes assumptions about life. The following two types of combat exposure can produce trauma: exposure to direct or indirect fire, observing the dead, or being wounded; and enduring the constant threat of injury or the uncertainty of combat, coupled with concern for family members back home.

People deal with such trauma differently. Research shows, depending upon one's life experiences, perceptions about meaning and purpose, or the degree of emotional support, the impact of a traumatic event upon a person varies.<sup>4</sup> The experience of combat trauma can produce long-term detrimental effects. Among these effects, the most severe form is PTSD, which currently afflicts 11 to 18 percent of our combat veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

## **Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma**

The spiritual component of trauma is "an event (that) severely disrupts the individual's spiritual orienting system, which refers to a generalized set of spiritual beliefs, practices, and relationships."<sup>6</sup> The more threatening and damaging the effects of the event to an individual's core spiritual values, the greater the spiritual trauma. Access to spiritual resources and the strength of a person's spiritual values and faith

can moderate the effects of trauma.<sup>7</sup>

Understanding and exploring the spiritual dimensions of trauma can assist chaplains in providing spiritual interventions and designing resiliency-building measures. The effects of wartime trauma, particularly PTSD, go deeper than psychological disruption, which can include insomnia, irritability, isolation, intrusive memories, hyper-vigilance, nightmares, or flashbacks among others. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, Text Revision* (2000) identifies 17 symptoms of PTSD.<sup>8</sup> While these effects are serious, research indicates there are also spiritual effects such as guilt, grief, shame, alienation, loss of meaning, and loss of faith that are spiritual symptoms of PTSD among many others. These symptoms, however, are not usually addressed in the treatment of Soldiers suffering with PTSD.

“Jack” (not his real name) experienced heavy combat in Afghanistan while serving with the 10th Mountain Division.<sup>9</sup> He experienced many narrow escapes and traumatic moments including the deaths of close friends. Sometimes he sees the faces of Soldiers he placed in remains bags, suffers with irritability, and occasionally has nightmares. Yet, Jack does not suffer from PTSD. His symptoms are lessening and he is able to function well at home and at work. Many factors influence the development of PTSD symptoms. They include: upbringing, age, sex, social status, education, and previous exposure to trauma. Nevertheless, Jack believes his strong sense of spirituality moderates his trauma symptoms and enables him to cope with his wartime trauma. He comments:

The only way I have been able to get over my experiences is by reading my Bible, attending Bible studies, attending [worship] services, and having a strong family base. A lot of Soldiers I see don't have a deep-seated faith or roots; those are the ones who can't handle it. My faith in God and my leaders help me... I know everything is done for a purpose. God has a plan for my life. I think it [combat trauma] is ultimately to make me stronger.

In the study conducted by the author, the presence of spirituality played an important role in moderating wartime stress and trauma. Among 165 Soldiers surveyed, 43 percent acknowledged their spiritual beliefs highly enabled them to cope during combat. Other resiliency factors included the support of comrades, support from the home front, mission focus, and unit teamwork. The following chart reflects survey data compared to similar data gathered from personal interviews (N=30) the author conducted as part of the study.

| Method    | Comrades | Spirituality | Home Front Support | Mission | Teamwork |
|-----------|----------|--------------|--------------------|---------|----------|
| Survey    | 56%      | 43%          | 59%                | 50%     | 58%      |
| Interview | 17%      | 53%          | 47%                | 33%     | 23%      |

**Figure 1: Supportive Resilience Factors During Combat**

The data suggests that the relationship Soldiers have with comrades, with friends and family, and the experience of other home front support significantly sustains Soldiers during the rigors of combat. Among the 165 Soldiers participating in the survey, 36 percent reported moderate to high exposure to combat. The most frequently reported combat trauma exposure was the handling of human remains (23%) and the experience of direct fire engagement (19%). Across all ranges of exposure from low to high, 10 percent reported they had been wounded.

Furthermore, a high percentage of Soldiers indicated that mission focus (understanding their purpose in combat) and their participation with teams, i.e., performing combat operations as a group, made them more resilient. This information was gleaned from Soldiers returning from combat (within 6 to 8 months after redeployment) in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) and is not surprising. However, it affirms the importance of these factors and provides an azimuth for chaplains indicating where we should focus our efforts. It also affirms the criticality of spirituality and spirituality-based measures that involve the strengthening of relationships. The data demonstrate the continued need for such programs as Strong Bonds, other unit-based spiritual fitness programming, worship services, prayer meetings, and personal worship.

### Building Resilience

Moderating the effects of combat trauma is the goal of building resilience. The presence of resilience can provide a protective shield for the Warrior. The idea of using resilience to moderate the effects of PTSD mirrors those researchers who claim trauma produces emotional and spiritual growth.<sup>10</sup>

Resilience is described as the ability of an object to regain its original shape after being bent, stretched, or compressed.<sup>11</sup> It represents the ability of the Soldier to bounce back with possibly some impairment and challenge, but ultimately return to their original baseline functioning.<sup>12</sup> According to Walsh (1998), building resilience occurs when one rebounds “from adversity strengthened and more resourceful.”<sup>13</sup> Studies on resilience also indicate that resilient people possess certain strengths that help them survive and potentially grow.

Resilience is a learned behavior involving thoughts and actions. It represents “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and significant sources of stress.”<sup>14</sup> The presence of resilience indicates adaptive responses at the time of the trauma event and during the recovery period. Resilience is like a sponge ball, though compressed, it regains its original shape when it is released. This is the goal of resiliency-building measures: to develop in Soldiers the capacity to respond to a traumatic experience rapidly and appropriately so that they regain their original baseline functioning. Nevertheless, developing flexible and adaptive Soldiers is not easy. The diagram below (Figure 2) illustrates how the presence of resilience interacts with the experience of trauma.

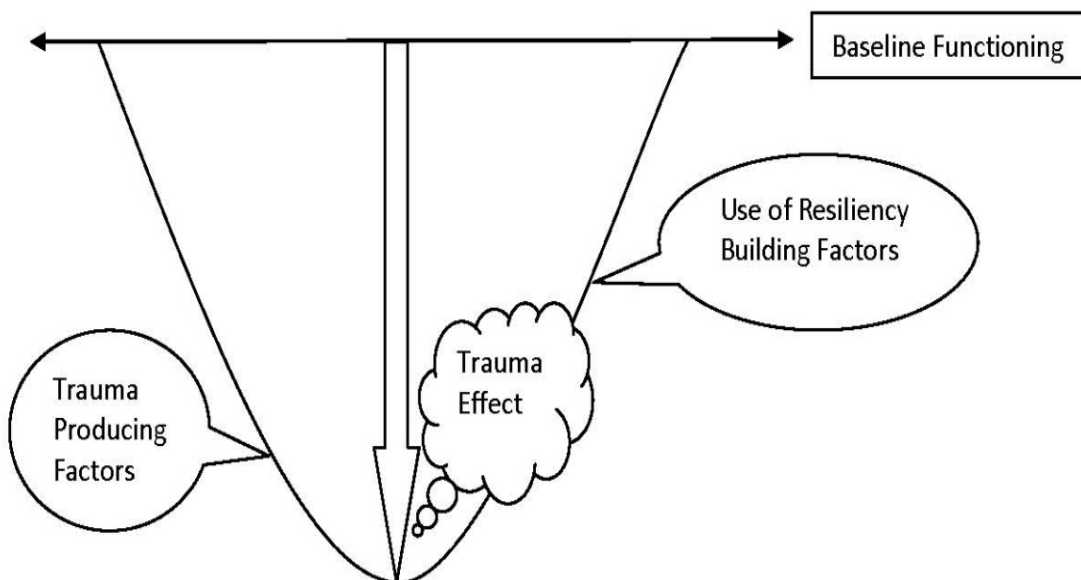


Figure 2. The Trauma/Resilience Curve



Research shows that the development of strengths, whether derived from adversity or not, increases resilience and protects against the most damaging effects of traumatic stress.<sup>15</sup> Research over the last two decades on family systems demonstrates the efficacy of focusing on strengths and not weaknesses.<sup>16</sup> The experience of trauma does not have to lead to negative or debilitating effects. Several studies reveal that many people who have experienced abuse, poverty, and violence overcame their hardships and thrived. Dugan and Coles (1989) found spiritual resilience nurtured by deep-seated convictions enabled people to rise above their challenges.<sup>17</sup>

In a study of 182 families conducted by Lietz (2006), which tested the variables of risk, family strengths, and family functioning, the presence of family strengths predicted higher levels of functioning despite the level of risk. Family strengths included: insight, initiative, independence, creativity, social support, humor, and morality/spirituality.

In other studies on resilience, researchers identified three additional protective factors that supported the development of resilience: flexibility, appraisal, and social support.<sup>18</sup> Kobasa (1985) discovered that resilient people exhibited three basic attributes: a belief that they can control or influence the events in their life; an ability to feel deeply committed to the activities in their lives; and a positive view towards change.<sup>19</sup> From a spiritual and Christian perspective, resilience may be viewed as a belief that God is in control of one's life, that one's commitments include a devotion to matters beyond oneself, a higher purpose, and that personal transformation induced by trauma and stress is the means that God often uses to bring one into conformity with Christ. In several of the interviews conducted for this study, Soldiers expressed that their ability to cope with combat trauma began with their acknowledgement of God's sovereignty over their lives.

Additionally, resilient people operate within established networks where they regularly access resources, develop strong bonds of love and trust, and participate in communal rituals. Those who possess a history of success in overcoming challenges, and who have learned from their adversity, are more resilient than those who possess no history of success in facing hardship.<sup>20</sup> Waynick, Frederich, Scheider, Thomas, and Bloomstrom (2006) maintain that resilience is developed in people by fostering religious and interpersonal connections, maintaining attachments, and nurturing a person's connection with God.<sup>21</sup>

Elder and Clipp (1989) found that positive early life experiences contributed to resilience in combat veterans. Researchers have also found that the experience of negative changes accompany many positive benefits.<sup>22</sup> Those who experienced intensive combat exposure became "significantly less helpless and more resilient between adolescence and mid-life..."<sup>23</sup> They discovered correlation among combat veterans between the presence of emotional or behavioral problems in adolescence and a lower level of resilience at mid-life.

In conclusion they found, "resilience is an important psychological resource which can be developed by successfully meeting adverse conditions such as combat."<sup>24</sup>

Some studies among veterans indicate those who engage in humanitarian acts during combat or reparative acts of service after combat are less likely to experience

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1. Spirituality
  2. Tested Strengths
  3. Available Resources
  4. Deep-seated Convictions
  5. Insight
  6. Initiative
  7. Independence
  8. Creativity
  9. Humor
  10. Flexibility
  11. Positive Appraisal and Meaning
  12. Positive Understanding and Control
  13. Commitment
  14. Positive View Towards Change
  15. Established Networks and Social Connections
  16. History of Success
  17. Humanitarian and Reparative Acts
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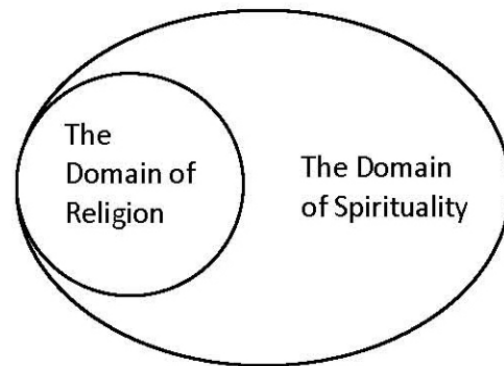
**Figure 3. Resiliency Building Factors**

deep and lasting effects of posttraumatic stress.<sup>25</sup> Several Soldiers interviewed for this project said their participation in reparative acts after combat, such as speaking to veterans' organizations or to Soldiers enables them to cope with their symptoms of PTSD and contributes to their healing. During the author's tour of duty in Iraq (2003-2004), he observed that humanitarian efforts not only brought much needed support to local nationals, but tended to humanize the Soldier's role and balance the effects of wartime trauma by creating positive memories for the combatant. Furthermore, home front support through the provision of school supplies, clothing, and other items also contributed to this humanizing effect. While this phenomenon is beginning to show positive results, more research is needed to determine how participation in humanitarian actions during war contributes to resilience or promotes healing.

For resilience-building factors, see chart at the bottom of Page 77.

Spirituality is a component of resilience and builds resilience in the same way physical fitness develops physical hardiness. Several researchers attempted to define spirituality either as a "search for purpose and meaning involving both transcendence...and immanence..."<sup>26</sup> or "as being attentive to what is sacred and connected to a concept, belief, or higher power greater than oneself."<sup>27</sup> Spirituality has to do with the way people incorporate the sacred into their lives and how they find significance beyond themselves; it includes faith, religious practices, and experiences.<sup>28</sup> The literature on spirituality reflects a general consensus among researchers and clinicians about the meaning of spirituality. To this writer, spirituality has to do with the important questions of life: Where did I come from? Who am I? How should I live? What does my life mean? What is my purpose in life? and lastly, Where am I heading? Answers to these questions provide meaning and ultimately relate to God or the Transcendent.

Spiritual fitness is not separate from spirituality but simply the application and maintenance of spirituality. The degree of spiritual fitness in a person is proportionate to the satisfaction of spirituality, i.e., how satisfied a person is with the answers to the questions of spirituality. Spirituality is important to a discussion on resilience and trauma because it can provide a traumatized person a framework for understanding meaning and purpose for the trauma. The discovery of meaning in trauma is the only way a person can experience complete healing. Anything short of that is superficial and incomplete.



**Figure 4. The Domains of Spirituality and Religion**

The literature on spirituality indicates a growing interest in the use of spirituality in clinical intervention. This represents a significant departure from a long tradition among clinicians of ignoring or disparaging the place of spirituality in the treatment of disorders. The concept of spirituality is different from religion and usually occupies a larger context in which the specific and diverse expressions of religion are found. In the diagram (Figure 4), the author depicts the domain of spirituality in relation to the domain of religion. Religion often describes an organized and communal structure, adhering to specified doctrines, traditions, practices, values and beliefs.<sup>29</sup>

Active spirituality during combat and after combat is a resilience factor in promoting healing and recovery. Research indicates that combat veterans who prayed felt connected to God, possessed a sense of God's presence and protection, and indicated spirituality continued to play a healing role after combat. In the author's study, Soldiers reported prayer was the most frequent and important spiritual activity they engaged in that enabled their coping during combat.

This study also indicated worship attendance and participation in small groups helped Soldiers deal more effectively with their symptoms of PTSD. The literature on this subject found that Soldiers who exercised restraint, displayed mercy to the defenseless, and respected their opponent were better able to cope later with the effects of posttraumatic stress.<sup>30</sup> Among several Soldiers interviewed for this project, they stated respect for the enemy and adherence to the Rules of Engagement (ROE), and humane treatment of detainees also helped them later as they reflected upon their actions in combat.

Spiritual connection with God can assist the Soldier with the stress of combat and its effects later. According to one Vietnam veteran, prayer gave him “calmness in the chaos of battle,” “wisdom to make the right choices,” kept the “welfare of his men foremost in his mind,” and saved him from the “vanity of pursuing ‘glory, publicity, and body counts.’”<sup>31</sup> According to another veteran, “This spiritual connection helped him to abandon bitterness and hate and to feel he could forgive others and himself. This brought him peace and put him on a path of service and altruism that has further reinforced his healing.”<sup>32</sup>

In the survey developed by the author, Soldiers were asked to assess the influence of their spiritual values on coping and the development of resilience. Fifty-one percent of the respondents (N=165) indicated their spiritual values highly enabled them to cope with their experiences in combat. Forty percent of the Soldiers surveyed also said their spiritual values improved from the time before their combat, and only 16 percent said their values declined. Sixty-four percent of the Soldiers sampled in the same survey also indicated faith provided comfort and hope during combat. Although less than 18 percent said they had grown spiritually because of their wartime experience, 61 percent had a positive outlook towards spiritual growth. Despite the presence of posttraumatic symptoms among many of the Soldiers interviewed, most expressed a strong belief in God and reliance upon their faith to cope with their symptoms.

Among the 30 Soldiers interviewed for this study, Soldiers reported faith, prayer, family support, and leadership most often contributed to their resilience and helped them cope with combat. These results are consistent with research on spirituality and resilience and spiritual coping. While spirituality was a factor among almost all of the Soldiers interviewed (N=30), it was less clear to what extent spirituality enabled coping or how its presence contributed to resilience. More than half of the Soldiers surveyed said they believed a spirituality-based intervention protocol would be effective in assisting Soldiers struggling with their wartime trauma.

## **Conclusions**

Research indicates spirituality and the factors that support healthy interpersonal relationships, connectivity, and social networks contribute to Soldier resilience during combat. The same factors that provide a protective shield prior to combat and during combat, can support recovery and healing after combat. Even the perception of positive community support is a critical element in recovery.<sup>33</sup> The domestic and community support that Soldiers enjoy prior to combat and during combat or the lack of it determines the degree of resilience developed in the Soldier. The same factors of home front support, friends, and community can assist the Soldier in readjustment, recovery, and healing from the traumatic experiences of war.<sup>34</sup>

Chaplains serve a critical role in reminding their constituency of the import of spirituality and other resilience factors that enhance and sustain one’s relationship to God, their faith and faith group, their families, friends, and their community. Community outreach must include an emphasis upon the community’s role in keeping faith with the Soldier and their families, and the need to provide tangible expressions of support. In instances where these elements are evident, Soldiers and their families are more likely to endure wartime trauma and less likely to experience long-lasting detrimental traumatic effects.

There are three vital measures in building resilience in our Soldiers: establish supportive networks, provide spiritual fitness training, and establish or maintain relationship enhancing programs. According to current research among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan Soldiers want assistance in dealing with their anger and persistent irritability, marriage and family counseling, assistance with their internal stress, and other information that can help them positively reintegrate into society.<sup>35</sup> Engagement in altruistic activities such as speaking to community service groups and other organizations, and at schools can also assist veterans in their recovery. Additionally, combat veterans from our past conflicts provide an untapped resource to assist our current Warriors in understanding, coping and developing resilience to PTSD.

Soldiers are looking for spiritual answers and most welcome spiritual interventions for their problems. Chaplains do not need to replicate the work of mental health or community services, nor take the place of what these professionals do; however, chaplains have a critical role to play that augments mental health professionals and the medical community. We cannot shy away from our primary mission—bringing God to the Soldier and the Soldier to God. No one else does what we do. We serve as emissaries of divine hope, faith, and possibilities. We must be true to our calling and be the anchors of spirituality in our place of service.

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*Chaplain (LTC) Dean Bonura currently serves as the Command Chaplain for the U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command, Warren, Mich. He hold a Master of Divinity degree from Western Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has had numerous assignments and multiple deployments including service as Brigade Chaplain for 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division in Iraq from 2003-2004.*

# Soldier Resiliency and the Question of Evil

*By Chaplain (LTC) Robert Roetzel*

During the Global War on Terror, the military has devoted extensive time and effort to identify the emotional and psychological needs of Soldiers engaged in combat. Issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have received particular attention. Efforts to address this need will continue to receive the highest priority within the military community.

While it is important to recognize the role which mental health plays in maintaining the force, just as important in terms of maintaining overall Soldier resiliency is an appreciation of the spiritual component of the combat experience. In this regard, there are issues about which the Army needs to be aware and proactively engaged. In particular, this article will explore the need for our fighting force to understand moral evil as it pertains to maintaining spiritual resiliency within the context of just wars.

I would suggest that in recent years there has been a loss of clarity about this subject. One result of this is a particular type of ethical confusion, which is expressed in the concept of war as being a “necessary evil.” This concept has immediate relevance to Soldiers’ spiritual well-being, since it is based on an assertion that the use of military force, with its attendant death and destruction, is always an evil act on the part of those who engage in it. Various explanations are offered to support this claim, including objections that such use of force is contrary to the higher calling of human nature; an unreasoned regression back to the law of the jungle, which violates fundamental human dignity. There are also religious objections based on pacifist interpretations of the morality of war.

It is important to note in regard to the claim that war is a necessary evil, that its ethical censure is not restricted to the Soldier engaged in a conflict which he knows in his conscience to be immoral. Were that the case, the claim would simply reflect a widely accepted principle of the Just War Tradition – namely, that no one (Soldier or civilian) can assist (by means of military force or civilian support) a government engaged in an unambiguously unjust war. The fact is, however, that unjust wars are not the only or even primary focus of the “necessary evil” critique. The critique directs its ethical censure toward those who participate in just wars as well. Hence, according to this perspective, the best case that can be made for the use of military force is that it may sometimes be justified (as conceived by the Just War Tradition), but that it always remains a moral evil. This is why the perspective of war as a necessary evil is spiritually problematic for those who serve in our military forces. It would be of little concern were it merely subject matter for academic debates among ethicists. But as noted above, it has the potential to jeopardize every spiritually-aware Soldier who encounters it in one form or another.

We notice the language of “necessary evil” appearing at various times and places throughout our society, in secular forums as well as religious. Even a former U.S. President used this terminology when referring to war. President Jimmy Carter once said that “war may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it will always be an evil, never a good. We will not learn to live together in peace by killing each other’s children.”<sup>1</sup> Depending on Soldiers’ interpretation, his words could convey an unintended, yet still deeply disturbing message. It’s not hard to understand how the language of “necessary evil” in describing war could be confusing as well as spiritually troubling for America’s contemporary Soldiers. It confronts them with implied questions for which they need an answer: In what sense is war evil? Do Soldiers participate in evil when they engage in combat? What does this mean for Soldiers’ self-understanding of their moral character?

If a Soldier views his profession as being part of a necessary evil, he may consequently view himself as being essentially an agent of the state who willingly carries out its immoral deeds. Although the state

condones the Soldier's conduct and legally sanctions it, such a Soldier remains one who is basically willing to soil his soul by doing the state's dirty work. He thus, at least subconsciously, assumes a personal morality which ethicist Darrell Cole has labeled a "dirty hands" morality:

Popular opinion on the matter tells us that resorting to force in certain situations is 'necessary' to save the lives of victims of injustice (including ourselves). Yet such actions are also held to be 'evil' because warlike acts are 'inhuman' . . .so we go ahead and behave 'responsibly' (i.e., we use force), but we admit that in doing so we get our hands dirty, which calls for repentance . . . We commit sinful acts when we use force, even when it is employed for the sake of just ends. Thus warfare is viewed not as a positive good but as a necessary evil that taints all who touch it.<sup>2</sup>

The impact of this moral view on Soldiers' on-going spiritual health can be significant. Their moral self-understanding can become negatively riddled with deep feelings of guilt – a guilt that can gnaw away at their inner peace and good conscience. Soldiers can be haunted by their past actions and fearful of their future ones. This creates a crisis of spiritual wellness that can remain lodged not only in past experiences, but also project itself into Soldiers' present and future lives as well.

Clearly the concept of "necessary evil" has the potential to pose a significant threat to the spiritual health and resiliency of today's Soldiers. Unfortunately, this type of spiritual problem may not necessarily be resolved through current mental health programs. For their chief contribution does not lie in the resolution of questions dealing with apparent moral evil. There is a real difference between the realms of the psychological and the spiritual; the mind and the soul. The two are certainly related, but remain distinct; as do the remedies for their respective illnesses. Healing must be not only physical and psychological, but also spiritual if it is to be complete healing.

How then can we assist our military personnel in this regard? A basic key to "battle-proofing" Soldiers against this potential spiritual threat can be found by reclaiming our moral roots. During the early centuries of Western civilization, men of great intellectual insight pondered the issue of the Soldier's spiritual relationship to the evil of war, and offered valuable insights to following generations. To appreciate this fact, let us briefly consider the moral guidance offered by three representatives from the fourth, 12th, and 16th centuries: Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin. It is important to note that, from the perspective of personal morality, none of these great thinkers treated the reality of war as a necessary evil.

Augustine was arguably the greatest philosopher and theologian in the Western world of the fourth century. He witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire, when its territories were invaded by tribal powers from the north and east. This invasion brought terrorism and plunder to the inhabitants of lands which heretofore had known centuries of peace and prosperity under the "Pax Romana." Questions arose regarding the ethics of resisting these invasions by use of military force. In response, Augustine formulated the basic principles of the Just War Tradition. Of importance for our discussion is his included consideration of the Soldier's moral responsibility vis-a-vis the use of force.

For Augustine, conflict was always to be avoided if at all possible. But he also recognized that certain conditions can arise that present a moral imperative to attempt to rectify an evil situation. Augustine roots this imperative in the virtue of charity – the love of God and neighbor. Conflict is never entered into lightly. But a Soldier's service is moral and virtuous, even in the traumatic circumstances of war, if it is motivated by such virtue:

The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to punish these things, when force is required to inflict the punishment, that in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Augustine would explain that our Soldiers engaged in the Iraq or Afghanistan campaigns, for the sake of protecting the human rights of their citizens and restoring a dignified way of life, do not incur moral guilt for doing so. Rather, they can take pride in having performed a noble act of charity, while at the same time regretting as all men of good will do, the evil circumstances which made such action necessary. Understood from this perspective, the tragic experiences of Soldiers serving in just causes will certainly try their souls, yet never diminish but only deepen their spiritual vitality. And this is essential for resilient, enduring soldiering.

In considering next the greatest philosopher and theologian, Thomas Aquinas, one finds his moral assessment of the Soldier's relationship to war to be consistent with that of Augustine. For Aquinas, like Augustine, a Soldier acting for the sake of protecting the rights of others is not tainted by moral evil. There is nothing dirty about such deeds; nothing that involves committing a necessary evil. On the contrary, his actions are thoroughly virtuous. It is significant that Aquinas included this topic within his consideration of the virtue of charity. As Darrell Cole notes, Aquinas understood such virtuous soldiering as an exceptional expression of love for God and neighbor: "War, for Aquinas, can be a means to a just peace as well as a means to destroy an unjust peace. . . We keep a just peace and fight just wars because these are acts of charity."<sup>4</sup>

Thus echoing Augustine, Aquinas recognized an imperative to use force in the service of others. He would thus advise Soldiers that the virtue of charity demands such action in certain circumstances. Indeed, the suffering, death and destructive circumstances of war are always evil in themselves (a fact which President Carter's remarks, if correctly understood, emphasized), but good and virtuous Soldiers can be found in the midst of such conflict, striving to bring it to a just end and restore peace.

This perspective of military virtue was further explained in the 16th century by John Calvin, a major spokesman of the Reformation. Calvin asserted that Soldiers play a key role in the struggle between good and evil. Soldiers serving in a just cause as described by Augustine and Aquinas, far from being perpetrators of moral evil, are serving as agents of God's righteousness. Calvin regards those who fight for the sake of justice as being virtual instruments in the hands of God, ensuring that the cause of divine providence is advanced: "Calvin, too, looks at the Soldier as an agent of God's love . . . Calvin argues in this way because he holds that to soldier justly – to restrain evil out of love for neighbor – is a God-like act. It is God-like because God restrains evil out of love for His creatures."<sup>5</sup>

Thus, like Augustine and Aquinas, Calvin understands armed conflict as a regrettable but a frequent occurrence in a less than perfect world. He would insist, however, that there are just and unjust causes within such conflicts, and that the actions of Soldiers who serve in the former are good and righteous. Indeed, they do not serve with "dirty hands." He would certainly say that American forces who have sought to bring such virtuous presence into the tragic areas of the world, have not only furthered God's design for all his people, but deepened their own spiritual character as well.

Over the past centuries great minds like Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin have passed on a valuable perspective of continuing importance for today's Soldiers. They make a crucial distinction between moral evil and natural evil – the distinction between actions for which a person should feel guilt, and the evil circumstances within which actions, good or bad, take place. It is a perspective that is crucial for Soldiers' spiritual health because it enables them to replace a "dirty hands" morality with a "clean hands in a dirty environment" morality. And this represents an important shift in moral self-understanding.

It is not wise for the Army to lose touch with the moral legacy of our Western culture as it prepares its Soldiers for today's and tomorrow's conflicts. For within those centuries is found a rich source of wisdom concerning the great questions of the human experience. Admittedly, some might say that the forgoing discussion is informative, but ask how it can be of practical use to today's force. Let me answer that with another couple of questions: How many Army leaders are addressing this issue as part of the character



development of their Soldiers? Are they talking about it during AARs, “under the oak tree” mentoring sessions, pre- and post-deployment training? And finally, what kind of answer to these questions are Army leaders giving our Soldiers today (if any answers at all)? Imagine the difference such discussions could make in helping Soldiers understand this complex issue. The result could enable Soldiers to recognize their role as professionals, who within the tragedy of war are not compromised by evil, but ennobled by the charity of selfless service. Leaders could thus provide their Soldiers with a moral distinction that is both real and crucial for America’s Soldiers of character. No doubt leaders consistently integrate Rules of Engagement briefings into their training. That’s a good and necessary thing. But ROE briefings may not meet this need of a Soldier’s moral awareness and spiritual preparation for combat. ROE identify actions permitted under various circumstances, but not the moral meaning of those actions. And it is the moral meaning of actions that create either spiritual peace or turmoil within the souls of our Soldiers. Of course, to provide this strengthening of Soldiers’ spiritual resiliency requires intentionality on the part of leaders, which in turn has significant implications for military training. As leaders prepare their training strategies to instill the force with its professional military ethic, this spiritual resiliency component must receive due attention. For it can only be accomplished through intentional integration into appropriate windows of opportunity within the major training programs.

Soldiers who experience the trauma of combat may well need the healing made possible by the mental health sciences. But they may also have a need that can only be adequately met through spiritual healing, or better yet, proactive spiritual preparation. Granted, the spiritual perspective discussed here is one of several on the contemporary scene. Undoubtedly some will not find it a helpful framework with which to understand the moral issues involved with Soldiers and armed conflict. But it does offer today’s Soldiers an alternative to the “dirty hands” morality, which speaks to them from various quarters with a loud voice. It is an alternative perspective, rooted in the philosophical and theological tradition of their Western culture, which presents a virtue-based understanding of their spiritual life within the profession of arms. For this reason, it is an important component for sustaining the Soldier’s total well-being. And that is reason enough to have its voice heard as well.

#### Endnotes

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*Chaplain (LTC) Robert Roetzel currently serves as the chaplain ethicist of the Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic, the Army’s proponent agency to increase Army-wide understanding, ownership, and sustained development of the professional military ethic through research, education, and publication. His previous assignments include: Deputy Garrison Chaplain, Fort Myer, Va. (07-09); Brigade Chaplain, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, Iraq (05-06); Deputy BSB Chaplain, Heidelberg, Germany (03-04); Assistant Professor, Command & General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. (00-03).*

# A Question of Spiritual Resiliency in Context

*By Chaplain (MAJ) William Scritchfield*

What is spiritual resiliency? As clergy, we seem to know what it is when we see it, yet defining exactly what it is not easy. Our challenge, is to clearly define and address matters of spiritual significance in the context of United States military operations. In this article, I propose a personal contextual evaluation of our setting through the consideration of a several common terms, several pre-suppositions, grappling points, and offer several resolution points to consider.

The concept of spiritual resiliency presumes an agreed upon spiritual steady state defined as good, that an individual envisions and progresses towards that end state, and that another can facilitate such growth for that individual. Assuming the previous statement to be accurate, three terms typify the spiritual resilient lexicon: peace, journey, and patience. The first term references an agreed upon steady state, the second acknowledges the context and the equipping necessary to achieve said state. The third speaks to the personal motivation required of the individual. Patience requires a free agent exercising a choice in the face of opposition.<sup>1</sup> These three words are foundational to the function of spiritual resiliency.

As to the evidence of spiritual resiliency or a functional end state, the U.S. Army attempted to define broadly the spiritually healthy person. The stated purpose for spiritual health or “spiritual well-being,” is important since Soldiers function more effectively when they have a support system or framework of meaning to sustain them.”<sup>2</sup> In short, spiritual resiliency becomes empirically evident within the context of community, and the evidence is an individual’s ability to make meaning constructively from life experiences and employs the insights in regenerative emotional and behavioral patterns of living.

What does this mean in our context? Broadly defining a context sets up obvious gaps for exceptions. However, several trends seem relevant for the present discussion. First, we seem to be experiencing the nadir of the warrior archetype in our collective cultural psyche. This is not to say that we have lost true warriors from our society. Rather, the culture struggles to integrate the warrior archetype into the community consciousness. Subsequently, integrating warriors into society, both familial and the broader community, results in numerous friction points.<sup>3</sup>

A second issue of contextual concern is a growing fundamental rejection of received traditions. Much like the Lost Boys of Neverland, this generation seems to prefer abstract non-event based existence to fundamental existential engagement of life across a broad range of experience. In a sense, the current culture embraces a generationally horizontal integrative process for making meaning rather than embracing a vertical integrative process or a bi-axial process inclusive of both.<sup>4</sup> The results of culture extensively embracing generationally horizontal processes could give rise to unhinging therapeutic meaning making derived from the opposite axis.

A third concern and perhaps most grave is the anesthetized culture. Life’s natural rhythm moves from joys to sorrows. When life is good, it is natural to enjoy life to its fullest. However, what happens in sorrow? At the very point of need, our culture tends to promote anesthesia. Although the anesthetizing agent comes in many forms, each bears a common theme: consumption. Buried under the mounds of accumulated goods, debt, broken relationships, addictive behavioral patterns, we find an individual in pain making repeated disorganized attempts at wholeness.<sup>5</sup>

Grappling with these cultural concerns is no mean feat. The best place to initially grasp is with the

anesthetizing process. Increasing an individual's threshold for pain without harmful degradation into emotional anesthesia provides the first step toward recovery. Edwin Friedman suggests that reduced emotional anesthetizing is best evidenced within the family system. "If one family member can successfully increase his or her threshold for another's pain, then the other's own threshold will also increase, thus expanding his or her range of functioning."<sup>6</sup> Of course, there are limits to increased thresholds; abuse being one such limit.

A healthy threshold for pain within a family system requires something more. An individual's increase pain threshold demands that others within the system become responsible for their own pain. The acceptance and management of one's own pain is the second grappling point for our discussion, and a foundational principle of moral agency.<sup>7</sup> An individual accepting personal moral agency comes to grips with the full spectrum of personal emotional, intellectual, and spiritual experiences, and then adapts mental models enabling behavior and emotional developments that facilitate growth. Some call this process, "revising your assumptive world."<sup>8</sup>

In light of culture and context, how do we assist Soldiers and their family members implement spiritual resiliency? Institutionally, the Army employed several beneficial programs: Strong Bonds and Battlemind to name two prominent programs known to most in the Army. Locally, chaplains lead spiritual renewal seminars and spiritual development programs through various chapel programs. Those who engage in these programs often report beneficial results.

The question becomes, "How do we assist spiritual resiliency development in those who do not participate in such events?" I believe there are three broadly drawn conclusions to enable us to assist with the developmental process of spiritual resiliency. First, generalizing readiness to employ resiliency techniques needs to be avoided. In one of Edwin Friedman's fables, he reminds us that some individuals will attempt to make everyone else responsible for their issues and refuse to employ their own resiliency skills.<sup>9</sup> Their refusal to employ their own resources often culminates in their disorganized attempt at wholeness, leading to broken relationships personally and professionally.

Given the first conclusion, a second conclusion is the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to spiritual resiliency. Much of the multi-disciplinary team is already in place: commanders, chaplains, behavior health professionals, medical professionals, community agencies, and law enforcement. Coordination among the team members remains problematic, although such bodies as the Case Review Committee provide an opportunity for such coordination on a case-by-case basis. The current approach remains reactive, and that is partially due to the points discussed in the first conclusion.

The third conclusion, then, is the need for a proactive method of community development that addresses both the individual and corporate nature of spiritual resiliency. Programmed events partially answer the need. A fuller response will require a robust broad-based community mentorship attitude. Often, such mentorship development flourishes within the chapel communities, yet fails to pierce the broader community. Thought and context need to inform the design of programs and events initializing and reinforcing the mentorship impulse, and then they need funding and superior promotion and support throughout the community.

Spiritual resiliency is an individual's journey to increase capacity to make meaning of life's events and then employ the learned lessons constructively. Constructing an environment necessary to nurture such an individual will require a community approach: a community of mature individuals reinvesting living capital back to those willing to receive such lessons.

#### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Dictionary.com, "patience," in *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. MICRA, Inc., ed, <http://dictionary.classic.reference.com/browse/patience/> (accessed May 29, 2009).

<sup>2</sup>Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-63-12, *The Army Health Promotion Program, Spiritual Fitness*

(Washington: GPO, 1987), 1, Adobe Acrobat PDF.

<sup>3</sup>Shay illustrates key points of friction for the returning warrior and for his or her community upon return as cited in Jonathan Shay M.D., Ph.D, *Odysseus in America* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 1.

<sup>4</sup>Bly produces a compelling argument regarding the laying aside received traditions and the implication of producing “half-adults” in society as cited in Robert Bly, *The Sibling Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), viii-ix.

<sup>5</sup>The concept of “disorganized attempt at wholeness” arose during discussions on patient adaptive behavior as he grasped the implications of his illness as cited in Fred Schilling Dr., “Lectures on Pastoral Care,” speech delivered to Clinical Pastoral Education Students, September, 2005, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Center for Clinical Pastoral Education, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup>Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985), 47-48.

<sup>7</sup>The question of moral agency embodies moral knowledge, moral judgment, and moral motivation. In assuming personal responsibility, an individual can potentially fuse knowledge, judgment, and motivation into healthy patterns of living. Moral knowledge, moral judgment and moral motivation potentially shares commonalities across all cultures as suggested in Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature, “Moral Agency,”

*Centre For The Study Of Mind In Nature. The University Of Oslo*, [www.csmn.uio.no/research/moral-agency/](http://www.csmn.uio.no/research/moral-agency/) (accessed June 2, 2009).

<sup>8</sup>Worth Kilcrease, “Mourning: Revising Your Assumptive World,” *In Due Course*, June 15, 2006, <http://www.blog.kilcrease.com/2006/06/15/revising-your-assumptive-world/> (accessed June 3, 2009).

<sup>9</sup>Edwin E. Friedman, *Friedman's Fables* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1990), 12-13.



*Chaplain (MAJ) William Scritchfield is currently a student at the Intermediate Level Education Course, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. He first served as a chaplain assistant in the active and reserve Army components from 1984 through 1993. He continued to serve as a Chaplain Candidate and as a Chaplain in the Kentucky Army National Guard from 1993 through 2002. He returned to active duty in 2002.*

# Religious Leadership in the Army

*By Chaplain (MAJ) Paul Jaedicke*

In *Shadow Warriors*, retired General Carl Stiner makes the following observations about spiritual strength and military leadership:

The Q course and the Survival, Escape, Resistance and Evasion (SERE) experience revealed to me that in order for a leader to possess and project the courage expected by his men in combat, he himself must find the means to be at peace with himself. For me, this strength comes from an abiding faith in my relationship with God. This strength allows a person to live one day at a time without fear of death. I have never known an atheist in combat, and I do not ever expect to find one. I do not believe that this is a revelation discovered only by Carl Stiner. Based upon my experience, it is a belief that serves as the inner strength and motivation of the greatest majority of all combat leaders, both officer and enlisted. I do not know of a substitute for this.<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual strength and military leadership are not mutually exclusive, despite those who believe that religion is a crutch. Taken to its logical conclusion, the false idea that religion is a crutch implies that a religious person is a weak person, and therefore, a religious person will be a poor combat leader. Stiner and our nation's military history refute this notion. Many of our nation's greatest military heroes were people of abiding faith, such as General George Washington and Sergeant Alvin York.

Today's Army recognizes the relationship between spiritual strength and good military leadership. A key component helping Soldiers become spiritually fit (and better military leaders) is the religious leadership provided by Army chaplains. Understanding the importance of the Army chaplain's religious leadership, this article will first define religious leadership and second, identify the chaplain's religious leadership roles and responsibilities.

## **A Definition of Religious Leadership**

When leaders speak, people listen. In *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, John Maxwell recounts a story about former NBA star Larry Bird's leadership on the court. During the final seconds of a close game, former Boston Celtics coach K.C. Jones called a timeout. He gathered the players together at courtside. Jones diagrammed a play, only to have Bird say, "Get the ball out to me and get everyone out of my way."

Jones responded, "I'm the coach, and I'll call the plays!" Then he turned to the other players and said, "Get the ball to Larry and get out of his way." When leaders speak, people listen.<sup>2</sup>

When hearing a story like this, some people may think to themselves, "I am not a leader. I am not an officer or an NCO. I am not a coach or a star player. I am not the director of anything. So I am really not a leader."

Leadership is not a title in front of a person's name or a sign on a person's office door. Leadership is influence. When we influence people to do something, we lead them. A private influencing Soldiers in his squad leads them, even though he does not wear chevrons on his collar. Leaders inspire us to do things we would not try on our own. Leadership is influence.

According to the Army, leadership "is influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization."<sup>3</sup> Influencing

people means getting people to do what you want them to do. While this definition of influence may sound manipulative in a religious context, it is a good starting point for a complete definition of religious leadership.

Religious leadership is helping people do what God wants them to do with a joyful heart. Chaplains are leaders. We influence people by helping them do what God wants them to do. Like other Army leaders, we provide purpose, direction, and motivation. As a Christian chaplain, the purpose, direction, and motivation I provide come from the Bible. Our purpose is to glorify God in everything (1 Corinthians 10:31). Our direction tells us how God wants his mission accomplished. God wants people to love him with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Deuteronomy 6:5). God also wants people to love their neighbor as themselves (Leviticus 19:18). Our motivation is spending eternity in God's presence. As a Christian, I cannot experience God's purpose, direction, and motivation in my life apart from His grace. As a chaplain, I influence Soldiers when I help them align their lives with what God wants them to do. In short, I lead them.

I also want Soldiers to follow God with a joyful heart. With God, attitude carries more weight than achievement. In the Bible, King Amaziah lost God's favor because "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a true heart." (2 Chronicles 25:2) God is more interested in *why* we do something than in *what* we do. With God, attitude counts more than achievement. As a chaplain, I want to influence Soldiers to do the right thing for the right reasons.

Religious leadership is helping people do what God wants them to do with a joyful heart. When I influence Soldiers in this way, they will better serve the Army. They will act in ways to accomplish the mission and improve the organization, regardless of their job title or duty description.

### **The Chaplain's Religious Leadership Roles and Responsibilities**

In the Bible, the religious leader Samuel serves as a good model for the chaplain's religious roles and responsibilities. Samuel was not just a priest and prophet; he also became a judge and kingmaker. As a priest, Samuel was God's man of influence in difficult times. He was the first great prophet after Moses, and the last and best of the judges. In Samuel's final years, God used him to anoint Israel's first kings and set up the kingdom. Samuel is the religious leader's leader!

A particular episode in Samuel's life sheds light on four religious leadership roles and responsibilities shared by all chaplains. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel's four religious leadership roles and responsibilities are pointing people back to God, looking to God for help, giving credit to God, and fulfilling his duties.

### **Pointing People to God**

In 1 Samuel 7, the Philistines oppress the Israelites. The Philistines occupy the foothills between the mountains and the coastline. They control the major trade route passing through the coastal plain. The Israelites feel abandoned, leaderless, and oppressed.

During this time, Samuel comes of age. Chapter 7 contains Samuel's first recorded public ministry as a religious leader. In verses 3-4, Samuel confronts Israel – he points the nation back to God:

Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

Like Samuel, chaplains must point people to God. Today, we sometimes call this bringing God to Soldiers and Soldiers to God. From this role come the responsibilities of a ministry of presence,

counseling, encouraging, and when necessary, confronting.

### **Looking to God for Help**

After pointing the Israelites back to God, Samuel summons Israel's tribal delegates to Mizpah. At Mizpah, the people fast all day, confess their sins, and worship the Lord.

In the shadows of the foothills, Philistine scouts watch from a distance. They fill out a "SALUTE" report: Size: thousands of men; Activity: a religious ritual; Location: Mizpah – an oval enclosure with walls three feet thick; Unit: men from all of Israel's tribes; Time: no scheduled festivals; Equipment: sickles, axes, picks, but no iron weapons, horses, or chariots.

The scouts report back to the Philistine kings, who convene a war council with their generals. They review the intelligence reports: Israel's 12 tribes gather at a border garrison... A charismatic prophet leads them... There are no scheduled rituals on the Hebrew calendar – it is not Passover, the Day of Atonement, or the Feast of Trumpets. The Philistine leaders conclude that Israel mobilizes for war. Everyone agrees, so the Philistines decide to launch a preemptive strike.

Back at Mizpah, Israel comes to repent, but the Philistines come to attack. The people turn to Samuel, "Samuel, what's going on? We did what you told us to do. And now this happens! We came together at Mizpah for this – to be slaughtered by the Philistines?" It is the Israelites' first big test after repentance. Initially they panic, but then in verses 8 and 9:

They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

When the Philistine troops march forward, Israel looks to Samuel, and Samuel looks to God. Like Samuel, chaplains must look to God for help. Out of this role comes the responsibility of prayer.

Prayer is vital to our religious leadership as chaplains. In Afghanistan, as part of every aircrew mission brief, I read a Scripture passage and prayed with our pilots, crew chiefs, and passengers. Although Afghanistan is one of the worst environments in which to fly helicopters (because of high winds, elevation, temperatures, and dust), we did not lose a single person or aircraft. At the time, we were the first aviation task force to finish an OEF deployment without loss of an aircraft, aircrew member, or passenger. It is not that we were too good to be hurt, but rather, we honored God by asking for His help, and by His grace He chose to honor us.

### **Giving God the Credit**

God answers Samuel's call for help with thunder from heaven. Before the battle is even joined, the Philistines panic when a huge thunderclap explodes among their ranks. In mass confusion, the Philistines break ranks and fall back in full retreat. Israel pursues and wipes them out. God ends Philistine occupation of the foothills. After the battle is won, Samuel gives credit to God for the victory in verses 12 and 13:

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "This marks the place where the LORD helped us." The Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory again. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines.

When God restores Israel's land, Samuel reminds the people of God's victory by marking the new border with a large stone. Samuel pays tribute to God by naming the stone "Ebenezer," which means "Stone of God's help."

Like Samuel, chaplains must give credit to God. Our religious leadership is an outflow of God's grace. Grace means receiving something good we do not deserve. If we do not deserve it, we cannot take credit for it – the credit must go to God.

Out of this role flows a responsibility to be a dispenser of God's grace. For many Soldiers, this is what sets the chaplain apart from all the other officers in his or her unit. A chaplain can and should be approachable regardless of the Soldier's rank. A chaplain can and should be a friend to all regardless of the Soldier's performance. A chaplain can and should be the one who gives Soldiers the benefit of the doubt, even when other officers think they do not deserve it. If Soldiers must earn our attention or merit our care, we fail as chaplains.

In the Army, a Soldier's career is based on performance, whether it is successful completion of training, a promotion, advanced schooling, or some other achievement. In the Army culture, if you want something, you must earn it. In the midst of the Army's merit-based culture, the chaplain must stand apart as one who gives God the credit for our success. We do this best when we model God's grace.

### **Fulfilling Their Duties**

After God defeats the Philistines, verse 15 observes, "Samuel continued as judge over Israel all the days of his life." Samuel provides religious (and political) leadership for Israel for the rest of his life – he faithfully fulfills his duties.

Like Samuel, chaplains must also faithfully fulfill their duties. For Army chaplains, the core leadership dimensions of values, attributes, skills, and actions outline our responsibilities. Since the Army is a values-based organization, chaplains must practice the L-D-R-S-H-I-P values, in both their public and private lives. Chaplains are expected to: develop and maintain their emotional, mental, and physical attributes; sharpen their skills while learning new ones; and take action by applying their knowledge.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower often explained the art of leadership in a simple but profound way. He would place a piece of string on a table and state, "Pull it, and it follows you wherever you want to go. But push it, and it goes nowhere."

In a day when effective leadership is sometimes confused with a pushy and domineering approach, it is important to remember the value of leadership by example. As we practice the leadership concepts discussed in this article, we will be effective religious leaders who influence others by example as we point people to God, look to God for help, give God the credit, and fulfill our duties.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Tom Clancy, *Shadow Warriors: Inside the Special Forces*, (New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 2003) 147.

<sup>2</sup>John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 49.

<sup>3</sup>*Field Manual 22-100, Army Leadership*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1999) 1-4.



*Chaplain (MAJ) Paul Jaedicke currently serves as the Brigade Chaplain of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Previous assignments and experience include serving as a combat engineer officer, senior pastor in the Midwest for ten years, and a battalion chaplain. His education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Claremont McKenna College, a Master of Theology in Pastoral Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry in Homiletics from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.*

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# Theology of Suffering and Evil

*By Chaplain (CPT) Daniel W. Hardin*

My personal theology of pain, suffering, and evil has developed significantly as a result of my recent deployment experiences. Like most chaplains, I was exposed to the writings of Saint John of the Cross, Henri Nouwen, and others who experienced pain and suffering and wrote on the experience of growing in faith as a result. During seminary, I also met Pastor Wally Magdangal, a man who was persecuted in Saudi Arabia for leading an underground church. He was imprisoned, tortured, and sentenced to death just because he was a Christian leader. I was unaware of how Christians suffered in the world today. I became curious about this and became aware of how undeveloped my theology of suffering was. In my comfortable world, I grew up knowing little of pain and suffering, except that which resulted from my play or stupidity. Surely no government or people were persecuting me for my faith. I knew nothing of death, torture, intense physical and emotional pain, depression, and the look of evil, except the textbook definitions. In seminary, my eyes were opened to the reality that suffering is part of life, especially the normal Christian life. I knew trials would come. I knew in some way, God could take suffering and make it into something good. However, I lacked the experience of significant suffering and facing evil to speak confidently about the matter. Little did I realize how quick that would change when I re-entered the Army after 9/11.

My wife and I understood that life in the Army would result in separation, trials, pain, and suffering of all sorts, not to mention the possibility of injury or death. This was sobering, but the calling and leadership of God brings peace for such uncertainty. In time, my first deployment came. I experienced homesickness, doubt, fear, loneliness, inadequacy, physical and emotional pain, and helplessness in ways I have never imagined. My first 45 days in theater included leaving my wife and children for war, news of my mother's diagnosis with breast cancer, my unit's first Soldier Killed In Action (KIA), 10 other accidental and combat-related deaths, and my personal encounter with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast near Fallujah. Following the injury and with a lack of understanding of what was happening in my body as a result of the trauma, I experienced the symptoms of mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and depression. Following my redeployment, a surgery, and the death of three extended family members, I experienced the symptoms of mild post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I sought professional, mental, emotional, and spiritual help. With the help of God and other people, I found a healing path. A significant transition took place- the painful thoughts and experiences from Iraq, which once seemed to control me, transformed into memories of the past. I now embrace those memories as a source of power and comfort, so I may connect with and help other people. I believe this is what God would have us do with our painful experiences (2 Cor 1, NIV). As a result of my own journey, my personal and vocational life have been revived and I have been able to connect with and help others now more than ever. I believe this is what spiritual leadership looks like. I believe all people, including spiritual leaders, will experience pain and suffering just because they are human and live in a broken world. I believe God is ready and able to redeem painful situations and suffering to teach us and to help us mature. I always believed, but now understand on an experiential level that suffering is not necessarily punishment for sin and shortcoming and I believe the lessons to be learned from suffering are not understood immediately, but are processed over time. The rest of this paper will detail how this experience has informed my theology of pain, suffering, and evil.

My unit, 1-501 Parachute Infantry Regiment, was deployed southwest of Baghdad in October 2006. I was late in joining my unit due to a last-minute knee surgery, but by mid-December I was well enough to

travel, and I arrived in Baghdad around Dec. 22. While awaiting transportation to our Forward Operating Base, our battalion suffered its first KIA. I had not yet arrived and now I had to plan and perform a memorial ceremony in addition to Christmas services. I arrived on FOB Iskan on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day came, and with it, two more KIAs. I felt like I was thrown into a fire. I had not finished my first memorial and two more were queued up. There was survivor ministry. There were questions from paratroopers and questions of preparedness and adequacy filled my mind, as I was the only chaplain on our small FOB. The new year brought us more death. A truck flipped into a canal and the crew drowned. Additionally, five paratroopers on our FOB were betrayed by Iraqi Police in Karbala and executed by insurgents, and a paratrooper with our B Company was killed by a sniper. In addition to ministry concerns, I was also dealing with my own issues. Homesickness began working in me and intensified when I received word that my mother was diagnosed with cancer. Responding to one crisis after another, it was difficult to establish a rhythm and consistency in my work. This was my first month.

Shortly thereafter, I was asked to travel with my chaplain assistant to an outpost near Fallujah for a worship service and survivor ministry for those in a platoon of B Company who had just lost a trooper to sniper fire. We arrived in Karmah and linked up with B Company on Feb. 3, 2007, at an austere outpost. I was told when I arrived that the troopers were a couple kilometers away on a platoon-sized patrol base. Their platoon was due a supply run, and on the evening of Feb. 4, my assistant and I rode with that convoy.

We traveled very slowly down one of the most dangerous routes in the area and approached the dirt path leading to the outpost. The first vehicle turned off the paved road onto the access road. Our vehicle followed and activated the sensor of an IED. The right side of my face burned and instantly swelled up. The blast cut my chinstrap and removed my helmet and eye protection. Debris in my eyes impaired my vision. Flames, flying rocks, and shrapnel produced burns and cuts on my head and right leg. My assistant, SGT Jemell Garris, found me, carried me to another truck, and directed the medics to tend to my wounds. We all survived the blast and I eventually returned to our FOB, beaten up and bloodied, but thankful I was alive. That night began a new chapter in my personal experience and understanding of pain and suffering.

I did not understand it at the time, but I began to experience the symptoms of mTBI. My vision became very sensitive to light, and my hearing to noise. I had headaches but thought they were related to the light and the fact my head hurt from my wounds. I also noticed that I seemed a bit more absent-minded than usual, but I attributed this to the stress of my first month and the wounds. I also noticed people around me saying odd things like, “Damn chaplain, what did you do to get God pissed off at you?” and “Chaplain, if you are getting hit, we are all screwed” and “Chaplain, get right back out there into the fight as soon as you can.” Thoughts went through my mind such as, “Yeah, what did I do, God, for you to allow this to happen to me?” and “God, don’t you hear what they are saying? Don’t you realize what they are thinking about You...about me?”

Although I never bought into “prosperity theology” I began to wonder how much I was infected by it when I questioned God in such manners. Looking back, I can see how immature my theology of suffering was. C.S. Lewis notes the “universal human feeling that bad men ought to suffer.” It is true that according to my flesh, I deserve suffering, pain, and death. But in Christ, I am a holy one, a child of God and called a saint. I wondered if God was punishing me, or perhaps he had his back turned on me, tending to other matters. This is an example of a logical fallacy that is common in our culture. It is called the appeal to consequences of belief. When broken down, it goes like this: “X” is true because accepting it has positive consequences. So as it relates to suffering, here is what I believed: “I am experiencing times of peace, blessing, and protection because I am being good. Therefore, being good produces times of blessing. Conversely, if I misbehave, then I will receive punishment. Therefore, if I am in a hardship or time of

suffering, I must have misbehaved and deserve it.” Not only is this argument a logical fallacy, it simply is not consistent with the testimony of Scripture. Examine the story of Job in the Bible - a righteous man who suffered tremendous loss. It is interesting to note how suffering and pain can reveal all sorts of flaws in what people believe about our world, ourselves, and our belief (or non-belief) in God. If this is true for me, a seminary-trained professional, how much more is it true for the young combatant working out his recent conversion to faith? What about those brought up without knowledge and faith in God? More importantly for chaplains, what about the non-believer and his conventional, distorted wisdom about God in times of suffering? I have heard these Soldiers say, “I am too far from God. He would never accept me. I am a hopeless case, and the proof is all this pain and suffering in my life and around me. See, God is mad at me!” And in part, there may be truth there. However, what they miss is God’s great love and immediate presence to accept, forgive and heal. These Soldiers, and as I have shown, at times myself, disqualify themselves based on logical fallacies and distortions of truth. But thanks be to God that what appears hopeless is often the avenue of God’s grace.

As spiritual leaders, we must be prepared to be used of God to be that avenue of grace during times of pain and suffering. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1 that he suffers pain, imprisonment, and hardship. This comes from the man who wrote half of the Christian scriptures and was used of God to turn the first century world upside down for Christ. This comes from the man who taught the Christian Church about the doctrines of grace and forgiveness. He also calls Timothy to join him in suffering. (2 Tim 1:8, NIV) Is this self-justification or madness? Neither. It is commentary on the normal human life, especially the life of a follower of Jesus Christ. So suffering comes to all people, including Christian leaders. It is part of the universal human experience. It is not necessarily a sign of sinfulness.

Until my personal encounter with trauma, I had head knowledge of suffering and pain, but little experience. Peter says, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.” (1 Pet. 4:12, NIV) I was not surprised it happened, but I was very surprised at the intensity and depth of the feelings and thoughts that came with suffering. My challenge was to make sense of what was happening and to find God in the pain and suffering. Unfortunately, I had limited experience and mental compartments to make sense of the suffering. Looking back, I can see how God was refining me and helping me develop my theology of suffering. C.S. Lewis said, “Pain insists on being attended to.” God took the pain inflicted by evil men to help me understand His healing and grace and attend to other deeper issues in my life. Bad things happen to all people, even chaplains. God is there to make something noble and worthy come out of the pain so that all things, even painful things, can truly work together for good. I believe the good He works out is for the benefit of those we serve in the chaplaincy - the Soldier and his or her family. My spiritual disequilibrium began when I entered theater and was in full spin the night of Feb. 4, 2007, when I experienced the physical, mental, and spiritual pain from the IED.

On the outside I healed well, and for a couple months I thought I was good-to-go. But around July, I noticed I was irritable and losing motivation. I began to verbally snap at people and withdraw from social contact. I did the bare minimum I could to fly low and go unnoticed. I called my chaplain buddy, Kim Norwood, who was in Kuwait at the time, and told him how I was feeling. He said it sounded like I was experiencing depression. My unit PA and buddy, CPT Craig Sink, asked me how I was doing, and I told him. He also said I was experiencing depression. What? I was not laying around crying, curled up in a fetal position! They both explained, “That’s not how depression typically works in men.” So, Craig gave me some anti-depressants for the remainder of the deployment, and I thought I would be good-to-go as soon as I got out of theater. We both thought this was transient and temporary in nature.

I had never experienced depression and did not understand those who wrestled with it. Dustin Shramek writes, “Experiencing pain and grief is like falling off a cliff...as we fall we see one and only one tree from

the rock face...This tree is our holy God.” This truth can be seen in the Psalms of lament. The Psalms of lament took on new life and meaning for me. They said exactly what I felt on the inside. Someone finally seemed to relate to my situation, and it was none other than God almighty. Even though I could not “feel” Him, I knew His back was not turned to me. I believe this is what held me together in my darkest moments. I also rediscovered I was not alone in theater. Many continued to come to me seeking consolation in their suffering. I felt I had little to offer at that time, but each time I shared the Psalms of lament (such as Psalm 13, 18, 42, 55, and others), I saw their hearts soak it in and the spark of hope ignite within them. I learned that suffering has always been a normal part of the human experience.

When we redeployed, I stopped taking the medication. For the first month or so, I really did feel better and I thought more clearly. I now see this as the normal “honeymoon” effect following a long, traumatic separation. It is a common, temporary experience. By the new year, additional stressors came into my life. I endured another painful knee surgery, and within a 40-day period, three family members died. Additionally, I was struggling with raising teenagers and readjusting to the busy schedule of family life and garrison duty. Again, I found myself becoming more angry, withdrawn, and unmotivated. Depression returned. I could not go to sleep, and when I did, I woke up several times through the night. I also noticed the onset of erectile dysfunction. Other symptoms of PTSD arose: survivor guilt, intrusive thoughts, hyper-vigilance, and a general mental fog. I kept most of my thoughts and feelings to myself, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to hide from my wife, children, and friends. I finally said to myself, “Here I go again. I am depressed. This feels worse than when I was in Iraq. I need help.” I went back to Craig Sink and told him what was happening. He prescribed sleep medication and an anti-depressant then looked at me and said, “You need to talk to mental health and I am putting in a consult for you.” I thought, “Oh no, not that! The Airborne Infantry will chew me up!” But deep down I knew he was right, so I humbled myself and spoke with a psychiatric nurse practitioner and a psychologist. The process of cognitive behavioral talk-therapy was helpful and similar to techniques I used in my counseling practice. With their help, I began to understand what was happening in my body, why it was happening from a physiological perspective, and how to cope with it. I am convinced of the place of secular help. Without it, I believe I would not be as far along on my healing journey as I am. I believe Soldiers, including the non-religious ones, could benefit from secular help. However, I firmly believe if we fail to address healing the spirit, we are destined to limp through life when we could run. Some secular, non-religious traumatologists such as Babette Rothschild and Peter Levine seem to indicate that addressing the soul/spirit of the person is an essential ingredient to healing. They do not offer a spiritual model or a particular faith-formula for wholeness, but they acknowledge spirituality as a crucial element to address. This should not come as a surprise for the person of faith. However, we often are left wanting when looking for a practical way to help someone, or more importantly, ourselves, when trauma comes.

I decided to address the spiritual dimension in the context of a small group. I knew I needed to connect with others, so I spoke to a local pastor who was experienced and skilled at inner spiritual healing. This course of action built upon the foundation of medications and talk-therapy and provided much help. I also opened up all lines of communication with my wife. Marriage demands openness and intimacy in communication, but due to my fears I chose to withhold much of my thoughts and feelings from my wife. This only aggravated my situation. When I chose to let her in my inner world, I found more help and support.

It was at that time the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) came to Alaska. My Brigade Chaplain, Pat Bailey, asked if I would be willing to share my sacred story at CAST. I agreed, and for the first time, I stood before a group of people and told them the whole story: facts, thoughts, and feelings. Some in the audience laughed at parts of my story...parts I did not think were funny. I felt naked and exposed. Later that day, two chaplains came to me and said, “Thank you for sharing. That was

encouraging.” Most of the chaplains seemed to avoid me, as if not knowing what to say. One chaplain came to me the next morning and spoke really loud and really slow, “how...are...you...doing...today...chap...lain... Har...din?” I thought, “Wow, my own people are treating me like this, and we are supposed to be the experts?” I was a bit discouraged, but I also felt a bit freer and less alone since many now knew of my situation. I chose to press on and continue to talk to others about my suffering and pain.

Later that month, I participated in a spiritual inner healing seminar hosted by the Anchorage Vineyard Church. Again, I shared my sacred story, determined to hold nothing back. In that community of support, respect, and dignity, I was positioned to experience the overwhelming healing power of God’s presence. I discovered that things from my past were aggravated by my experiences in Iraq. When I dealt with the former, the latter was addressed with ease. I had developed an image of God with His back turned to me. Because of my distortions of truth and prior wounds, I believed God was at best unaware of my pain or at worst, indifferent. It was in the context of a caring, skilled, grace-filled, Christian community that I found truth, healing, and freedom. Henri Nouwen writes,

A Christian community is therefore a healing community not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for new vision. Mutual confession then becomes a mutual deepening of hope, and sharing weakness becomes a reminder to one and all of the coming strength.

In Christian community, God’s truth resonated in my spirit. His peace came in and removed the fear, anger, bitterness, and pain. Suddenly, for the first time, I felt the fog lift. I felt alive again and I could laugh. The erectile dysfunction disappeared and renewed intimacy came into my marriage. Every symptom of PTSD with the associated intense emotions ceased. I continued my appointments with the psychologist and psychiatric nurse practitioner. They were amazed at my healing and monitored me for about a month before declaring significant progress had been made. They said I no longer needed their assistance. It was through suffering and pain that I discovered the power of unhealed wounds and the power of distortions of truth I believed about God and me. This power negatively affected my entire being. And it was through a loving Christian community that I experienced the matchless power of God’s love and grace. God’s power trumped the wounds and lies. It was there I found healing for my wounds and freedom from the lies.

I am certain any type of compassionate community would help one suffering from stress or the effects of trauma. I am certain secular support groups can offer help. However, I believe any effort that fails to address the spiritual dimensions of the hurting person is a partial, incomplete effort. Trauma affects people physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Healing endeavors must touch each of those dimensions as well. I believe the context of community provides the best platform to touch each of those dimensions. Peter Levine, commenting on how shamanistic medicine calls to the soul of the traumatized to return to community says,

“Come back to your country; to your people... to the Yurt... Come back to your father... to your mother.” A crucial parameter in the healing of trauma is reflected in this simple poetry. The welcoming support of friends, relatives, families, or tribal members is needed to coax the spirit back into the traumatized body. Shamanism recognizes that deep interconnection, support, and social cohesion are necessary requirements in the healing of trauma... In acknowledging our need for connection with one another, we must enlist the support of our communities in this recovery process.

While I do not advocate shamanism, this does illustrate the importance of both spirituality and community from the perspective of the secular, professional community. Spirituality and community are the staples of

the ministry. No one wants to feel alone navigating the storms of trauma. Community is essential. I believe a competent, compassionate, and spiritual community is the best way to find the healing path.

Subsequently, I began to feel driven and passionate about sharing my sacred story with my community of paratroopers. I set up six seminars and used the Army's Battlemind materials as the vehicle to share my story: four talks for paratroopers, one for spouses (my wife came and spoke with me to share her perspectives on my struggles), and one talk for leaders. The talks were well received and normalized what many said they were experiencing. At least 10 paratroopers I know were encouraged to step out and get help. Leaders approached me and said they had a fresh understanding about how this stuff works and now see it as an issue of wounding, not weakness. Ladies came to me and expressed relief that someone was talking about this. They felt like they were silently suffering while everyone else appeared good-to-go. This is the fruit of healing suffering and pain. This is the good that can come from evil. Over a year had passed from the initial trauma, and now I was seeing the fruit God grew out of the pain and suffering.

Healing is a process. It demands attention and intentional care for the body, the mind and thought life, the emotional self, and the spirit. All of this must take place in the context of a community. That community had to respect me, treat me with dignity, and treat me like a wounded Soldier rather than a weak freak. I would be remiss if I also did not acknowledge the importance of having a strong desire for wholeness. Healing from suffering and trauma demands the will to be whole. Peter Levine says, "...you initiate your own healing by re-integrating lost or fragmented portions of your essential self. In order to accomplish this task, you need a strong desire to become whole again." I have learned how important it is to desire healing and get to the place of not caring what others think or how much it may cost my pride to find healing.

The more I wanted wholeness, the easier it was to find it. And the more I share my sacred story, the more I experience God's Word: "The God of all comfort comforts us in our sorrow so that we may comfort others with the comfort we have received." (2 Cor. 1:3-4) Concepts in my head have sunk into my heart, concepts like Henri Nouwen's "wounded healer." Again Paul says, "But you have observed my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, and my persecutions and sufferings." (2 Tim 3:10ff) Paul used everything, including suffering and pain, to teach others how to mature in the faith. I have seen this truth active in my ministry since I have shared my story. As a result, compassion has come into my ministry like never before...and my Soldiers sense it. My life and ministry have been revived. I can now say what happened to me in Iraq, although it was meant for evil, has transformed into something very good.

Every Soldier who has experienced pain and suffering must appropriately share their story to find healing. Unfortunately, the tendency of some leaders is to hide their suffering and pain. Pride and fear of being misunderstood are real roadblocks to wholeness in the military culture as they keep us from appropriately sharing our pain and struggles. I believe spiritual leadership demands every chaplain share his or her sacred story of suffering and pain at the right place and time and I believe this example can help others overcome the cultural barriers to openness. Chaplains work in the military culture and understand the barriers of pride and fear, but we should not be so conformed to it that we lose our distinctive, spiritual perspective on matters like suffering and pain.

Every chaplain should be comfortable with their inner world, for it is there pain and suffering operate and it is from there that grace, healing, and comfort flow to others. In the chaplaincy, we are surrounded by many hurting "others." Every chaplain should know what his or her faith says about suffering, pain, inner healing, and how to touch the spirit of a Soldier with the power of God. Every chaplain should feel free to lower the facade and be authentic in a culture saturated in machismo, masks, and manliness. Every chaplain should have a strategy for addressing inner woundedness and be comfortable working cooperatively with other healing professionals, valuing their contribution to the hurting individual. I

believe the Chaplain's Corps has an opportunity of a lifetime before it - finding its definition in something that is squarely in its lane - connecting hurting people to God. No other institution can do that; no other is commissioned and expected to do that. We have the possibility to see the greatest spiritual revival among service members because the need is great. Christian Chaplains are spiritual leaders charged with bringing the good, healing news of Jesus Christ into the suffering of our contemporary operating environment. Let us be faithful to the call. The Bible says, "But where sin (*and I would say 'suffering'*) increased, grace increased all the more." (Romans 5:20, NIV)

Chaplains who have a healthy, biblical understanding of pain, suffering, and healing and a protocol for positioning people for wholeness, are God's agents for increasing grace.

### **Postscript (Oct. 1, 2009)**

It has been about 18 months since I experienced my first major breakthrough and relief of the symptoms of PTSD. I am reminded as I consider my healing story that healing is a process. Healing takes time and effort. It is like a surgery. The doctor performed the operation, and now the long process of recovery and rehabilitation begins. That process takes time and it can involve pain. That does not negate the positive effect of the surgery. For inner healing, there are moments of relief, refreshing, and consolation. But that does not mean we return to how we were prior to the trauma. It does not guarantee there are no residual effects from trauma that require more of God's healing touch. Being a wounded healer means staying on the healing journey for the rest of one's life. Since my first inner healing experience, I have had emotional ups and downs. Life presents more challenges and stress. More wounds come. There have been times where I feel joy and periods where I could see signs of depression swelling up from within. When dark seasons come, I must simply focus my efforts on intimacy with God, inviting him and a few others into my inner life, and to stay connected to the worshipping community. I am learning to be more at rest with myself, my experiences, and the path God has for me. At times, the healing journey is a struggle. However, the fruitfulness and rewards of seeing others touched by God is pure joy. This experience has revolutionized my life and ministry as a chaplain. I am forever grateful for God's touch on my traumatic experiences.

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*Chaplain (CPT) Daniel W. Hardin is currently assigned to the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, Fort Benning, Ga. He entered active duty after completing the Armored Crewman's Course at Fort Knox, Ky., in 1987. In 1991, he left active duty to pursue civilian education for military ministry and entered the Ohio Army National Guard where he served as a chaplain assistant. He earned a Bachelor of Science, Computer Information Systems degree from DeVry University, Columbus, Ohio in 1997 and a Master of Divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio in 2001. He was ordained with the Ohio District Council of the Assemblies of God in 2001. While preparing for military ministry, he served civilian churches in Columbus and Baltimore, Ohio.*

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# Spiritual Resilience

## Renewing the Soldier's Mind

*By Chaplain (CPT) Paul Tolbert*

Romans 12:2a "...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

BE – KNOW – DO is the starting point for Army Leadership and the ethic of today's Soldier. BE embodies the attributes that shape character. KNOW highlights the wisdom Soldiers should use in leadership as well as the information required in areas as diverse as tactics, technical systems, organizations, resource management, and human nature. Finally, DO is the Soldier's actions that directly relate to the impact they have on people and policy.

To promote spiritual resiliency among Soldiers, I make use of the Army model from the opposite direction. Drawing upon various readings and my view of Christian sanctification, my Spiritual Resiliency Plan consists of DO – KNOW – BE. By practicing virtue (DO) and discussing moral events (KNOW), the result will hopefully be Soldiers with a virtuous character (BE) who are spiritually resilient.

Though each component of BE-KNOW-DO is essential to the overall professional ethic, I believe the BE aspect is paramount. Drawing upon Steve Wilkens' *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics*, Aristotle's emphasis on the virtue and character of the leader is the goal of the moral development. Utilitarian and duty approaches each have their limitations. Specifically, a Soldier cannot prepare for every possible scenario. When the inevitable situation arises where the results are unclear or conflicting duties are present, the spiritually resilient Soldier with good character can be trusted to make the right decision. The Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote, "It is not the oath that makes us believe the man, but the man the oath."<sup>1</sup>

Sean Hannah and Patrick Sweeney in *Frameworks of Moral Development and the West Point Experience*, underscore the importance of practicing morality as a means to developing moral persons. "We propose that authentic moral development occurs in leaders through targeted developmental events, such as exposure to key moral/ethical experiences, coupled with coaching and periods of dedicated reflection." In this I see an emphasis on the DO (targeted developmental events) and the KNOW (coaching and reflection) of a Spiritual Resiliency Plan. From this, the natural process is to form the BE using the sequential stages of moral development:

- moral recognition – a soldier must first recognize that a situation contains a moral issue;
- moral judgment – a soldier then must process that moral issue to form a moral decision;
- moral intention – a soldier then transfers that decision into an intention to act; and
- moral behavior – a soldier must carry that intention through to actual behavior.

This concept of actions (DO) forming habits (KNOW) that in turn shape character (BE) is not new. In fact, it goes back over two thousand years to Aristotle. In *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle maintains moral virtue is acquired by repeating moral acts. How do we know when we have moved from the DO-KNOW to the BE of moral development? Aristotle believes it is when we find pleasure in doing virtuous acts. That is a sign that "the disposition has been acquired." In Aristotle's insight, I see a correlation to the work of Christian sanctification. No doubt similar examples can be found within other religious traditions, but I ask that you indulge me to speak from within my tradition.



The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2 that we are not to “be conformed to the pattern of this world,” but rather “be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*.” “Do not be conformed” is an imperative command. It is also in the passive form (suskamatzesthe) emphasizing that you are not doing the action, rather it is being done to you.

The word translated “world” is not the Greek “cosmos” but rather “eon” (tw aivni) meaning “age,” thus contrasting this “age” with the “age to come.” This emphasizes the aspect of being “holy” referenced in verse 3. We are to be “set apart.” We are just foreigners passing through to echo Philippians 3.

So the command is to not be molded by this age/culture into its pattern/form. One of the characteristics of this age (21st century America) is its individualism and demand for instant gratification. Each person can choose what is right or wrong for him or her. For what you say is sin, may be my lifestyle and who are you to tell me how to live my life? Thus one can no longer talk of sin which leads to no talk of judgment and therefore silencing the message of God’s mercy.

“Be conformed” is once again passive suggesting you and I are not the primary actors but are being acted upon. With both verbs being passive (“be conformed” and “be transformed”), it implies we are being acted upon by outside forces: either by “the spirit of this age” or the Holy Spirit of God.

Whereas “be conformed” suggests change as in putting on a mask (being molded to look like something else), “be transformed” is more of a change of being. Indeed the Greek word translated “be transformed” is “metamorphoosthe” from which we get the English word “metamorphosis.” Like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly, it is an enduring and lasting change of being.

How is this transformation accomplished? By the “renewing of your mind.” The participle (renew-ing) suggests a process rather than an instantaneous event. I liken this loosely to a reversal of the effects of sin. Damnation begins with the heart’s lustful desires. We act on the desires and commit the sin. This sin damns us eternally. Desire leads to sin which leads to eternal death. Salvation reverses this order. Through the atonement of Christ, we immediately have eternal life. However, my sinful habits and desires are not usually instantly changed. I have to exercise Christian habits of prayer, Bible study, worship, etc. Eventually, my mind is renewed and my desires are changed as well.

This idea of the Soldier as virtuous warrior is not just limited to Judeo-Christian western civilization. Within the Hindu castes of India, warriors belonged to the *kshatriya* caste. This caste included the nobles and was distinct from the lower *vaishya* caste consisting of other professionals like merchants, artisans, and landowners. Before it became hereditary, this caste was achieved based in part of one’s nature. Thus even in the East, the virtue of the warrior was a defining characteristic.

Spiritual resiliency training then is not for the faint of heart. It requires a certain amount of courage. There will always be risks for the virtuous Soldier. Rushworth Kidder defines moral courage as the intersection of principles, danger and courage.<sup>2</sup> It includes motives, inhibitions and risks.<sup>3</sup> It is not enough to talk about being moral. Soldiers must practice it deliberately so that when the unforeseen challenge arises, they will respond based upon the habits they previously formed.

My Spiritual Resiliency Plan consists of the DO – KNOW – BE model. By practicing virtue (DO) and discussing moral events (KNOW), the result will be spiritually resilient Soldiers with a virtuous character (BE). The DO aspect could involve deliberate acts aimed at generating a moral response. This could involve anything from community service (selflessness) to white-water rafting (courage). Each of these would be followed by the KNOW component. Here I see debriefings of the scheduled events as well as unplanned encounters such as battlefield missions. Discussions on their experiences coupled with regular worship and Bible study opportunities will aid the Soldier in understanding what they *should* do. The true test will be how they respond when no one is looking. Only then will we know if they have reached the BE level of moral development and are spiritually resilient. Like sanctification, I believe that to be a lifelong journey. Spiritual resiliency among chaplains is mission essential. Service as an Army Chaplain is

a serious calling. As civilian clergy, it is unlikely that we will be killed or tortured. Furthermore, it is easier to fake ministry as churches get caught up with the color of the carpet, styles of worship, etc. As a military chaplain, mortality is a serious risk for ourselves and our flock. Because of the stressors involved, Soldiers will catch on to hypocrisy immediately.

Civilian clergy are almost always ministry focused. This is another area of difference. Army Chaplains not only perform many if not all of the functions of civilian clergy, they also provide for the religious expression of other faith groups. A civilian Baptist preacher would never be expected to provide for a Wiccan's equinox service. This goes to the Army value of integrity. I have given my word to perform or provide for the religious expression of all Soldiers. It is my faith commitment that guarantees I will keep my word. This demands spiritual resiliency.

It is this spiritual resiliency that enables me to accomplish my mission. As an Army Chaplain, I am both a "Soldier of God" and an American Soldier. Speaking from within my own tradition:

- Empowered by faith in the risen Christ, I will always place the mission first.
- Being more than a conqueror through Him who loves me, I will never accept defeat.
- Knowing that I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength, I will never quit.
- Because I love my neighbor as myself, I will never leave a fallen comrade behind.

I am an Army Chaplain.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Richard Swain's "Reflection on an Ethic of Officership" accessed on May 30, 2009, at <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/07spring/swain.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Kidder, Rushworth. "Moral Courage." HarperCollins: New York. 2005. Pg 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Pg 35.



*Chaplain (CPT) Paul Tolbert is the Assistant Brigade Chaplain for the 2nd Brigade, 98th Division, 108th Training Command (Initial Entry Training) at Ft. Jackson, S.C. Most recently, he completed a tour as the Group Chaplain for the 595th Transportation Terminal Group at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. On the civilian side, he's a Religion Professor at Edgecombe Community College in Tarboro, NC and the Pastor of White Oak Baptist Church in Clayton, N.C.*

# 'Servant of the Servants of God'

## Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Chaplain Assistant

*By SFC Naomi L. Rankins*

As we celebrate 100 years of the chaplain assistant, let us reflect not just on the occupation from the time it was officially recognized, but let us remember those who have served in the capacity since the beginning of the Chaplain Corps. The Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Chaplain Assistant has evolved from a servant-type position to what it is today, a professional religious support position.

Although the Army Chaplaincy was started in July 1775, the only evidence of an enlisted aide during that time was written in the diary of Chaplain David Avery, of Patterson's Massachusetts's Regiment. He mentioned,

“My waiter is quite sick.” Twelve days later he mentions, “Robert - my waiter arrived from New-Town, in good health, and put up with me at Mr. Jhone's.”<sup>1</sup>

In the diary of Chaplain Avery, an assistant is written of very briefly. It doesn't appear that Robert, the assistant, had a very technically demanding job.

In 1861, during the Civil War, there is evidence of an enlisted aide, “Assistant Chaplain” Thomas Quinn of the 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery. He later became a Catholic Chaplain, but remained in the Army just a few months.<sup>2</sup>

During the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, Chaplain William W. Meech served as a Union hospital chaplain at Newport News, Va. In a letter to his wife, dated August 18th, Chaplain Meech described a meeting with a Soldier who was detailed to help him with some of his duties:

I have made the acquaintance of [Private] Eldridge Smith of Winona, Minnesota, a member of the 1st Regiment of Minnesota... who is to assist me a little in some of my work. He helped me [with] letters this morning. I have from 3 to 5 a day to write on [letterhead paper], ‘Soldiers Letter, W.W. Meech Hospital Chaplain.’ Have expectation of his aid in making a map or plan of our burial grounds.<sup>3</sup>

The first “official” enlisted aide to the chaplain was noted in 1878. The post chaplain at the time was also the post school master — in teaching school. The Army decided that a Soldier found competent to teach common school subjects should be detailed to do so under the auspices of a local chaplain. Although he was not awarded the title “Chaplain's Assistant,” nor was given that job description, a relationship was established between an enlisted duty and a chaplain's function.<sup>4</sup>

Not only were enlisted aides detailed to the chaplain in a garrison environment, they were also sent to combat with the chaplain. We cannot forget Corporal Calvin P. Titus, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for valor serving as a special assistant to the chaplain. Titus was assigned to the 14th Infantry in 1900 and 1901; he assisted Chaplain Leslie R. Groves in his work among the enlisted men. Titus was a musician and played the violin at worship services with Chaplain Groves. It was during the storming of Peking that Titus went beyond his military role as a musician and assistant to the chaplain. The company

commander asked for a volunteer to scale the great fortress wall that surrounded Peking. Titus replied, "I'll try, Sir." He successfully scaled the wall under heavy rifle fire and secured a rope, which the rest of his company climbed. For his actions, Titus was awarded the Medal of Honor.<sup>5</sup>

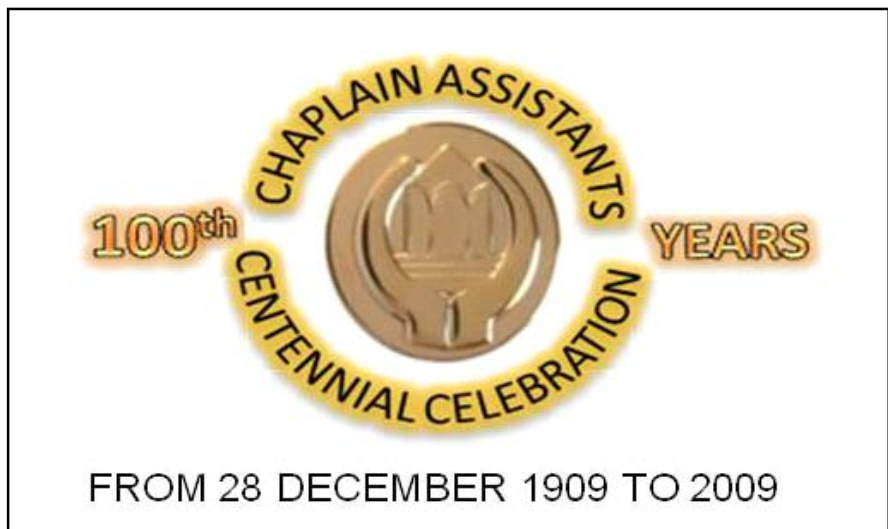
It wasn't until Dec. 28, 1909, that the MOS of chaplain assistant was established by General Orders No. 253. Since then, chaplain assistants have

deployed in support of every recorded campaign in the United States. Some have given their lives protecting the freedom of their country. Special skills needed to become a chaplain assistant have evolved over the years from being a musician and typist, to a driver and expert marksman. Whatever the skills needed, chaplain assistants' unique ability to blend with any type of military unit proves that they are truly a talented, committed, and versatile group of men and women. Unlike other service support positions, chaplain assistants are charged with the duty of supporting the religious and morale needs of their fellow Soldiers. Chaplain assistants could be found in the forests, jungles, and deserts, the foxholes and bunkers, and patrols and convoys.

Throughout World War I, there were several chaplain assistants who went above and beyond their mission. One was Corporal Greene W. Strother of Mitchell, La., was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism near Vieville, France, on Sept. 12, 1918. Strother helped with the successful capture of 14 enemy prisoners and their machine guns.<sup>6</sup>

Although the bravery, and willingness to help in the fight brought great pride to the chaplain corps for the actions taken by Corporals Titus and Strother, it is the primary religious support role chaplain assistants bring to the fight that are unique to the MOS. One example of the bravery of a chaplain assistant in their primary role is that of Corporal Laurence McDonald. On the Treasury Island Group in the Solomon Islands in December 1943, McDonald and his chaplain, Park W. Huntingdon, held a worship service for 75 men in a chapel just 100 yards from a 90mm anti-aircraft gun position. During the service, Japanese bombers passed over the island four times, each time causing the anti-aircraft gun to open fire. McDonald alternated between getting his chaplain to shelter and returning to his field organ. By the close of the service, he was still playing the organ for 74 men.<sup>7</sup>

W. Ralph Lufkin, a chaplain assistant during World War II, aspired to enter the ministry upon completion of seminary. However, on Oct. 17, 1941, he would have to put his education on hold in order to answer the call to duty, as many young men did during this era. Although Lufkin did not possess the skills as a typist or musician, he was accepted into chaplain assistant school because of his desire to one day become a minister. Lufkin proved himself to be the ideal chaplain assistant. He was able to get involved with many of the activities of his Soldiers, recruited musicians, and even preached on Sunday in the absence of his chaplain. On visiting a cemetery of allied Soldiers after arriving in Germany, Lufkin commented, "The world sees the glory of heroes, not the resting place of the ones who do not return." During WWII, chaplain assistants could only reach the rank of corporal. Lufkin is only one of the hundreds of chaplain assistants who served in WWII. I have no doubt about the impact they had on



Soldiers as they fought their way through Europe. Their selfless service and dedication to duty are attributes which exemplify what make Soldiers great.

During WWII, three chaplain assistants made the ultimate sacrifice. On Dec. 7, 1941, two chaplain assistants were killed during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. In April 1945, another was killed when the vehicle he drove hit a mine.

The testimony of a chaplain assistant in Vietnam showed he worked tirelessly to help out the chaplain and anyone else that he saw needed help:

“I did all the driving, and I packed a weapon. Chaplain Brown would drive for me if things were a little flaky so that I could keep the weapon ready. If someone wanted to mail a letter...I would carry it back with me and make sure it got out. At other times I would [help out], carrying all kinds of supplies for the medics.”

During 1972, the 71M Military Occupational Specialty was implemented into the NCOES (Non-Commissioned Officer Education System), and was accorded the same degree of professionalism as other enlisted specialties. During this same period, the way was paved for the acceptance of women in the MOS. SP4 Lorraine Doleshal was the first woman to be awarded the MOS of 71M, Chaplain's assistant. Today, women make up approximately one quarter of the total Chaplain Assistants.



**Chaplain assistants provide religious support for all Soldiers, provide or coordinate force protection wherever the Unit Ministry Team may go, coordinate Traumatic Event Management, manage property, facilities and programs and much more. (Courtesy photo)**



**Chaplain Assistant, Sgt. Keith Wright, assigned to 3rd Infantry Division Special Troops Battalion, provides religious support to LTC Nora Marcos during an exercise at Wright Army Airfield, Fort Stewart, Ga., during June of this year. (Courtesy photo)**

Sergeant Larry Bowman, a reserve chaplain assistant in the 1-258th Field Artillery, New York Army National Guard, gave his life on 9/11, attempting to rescue people caught in the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. Bowman was a security guard who entered and re-entered the collapsing buildings in an attempt to find and rescue survivors. The last time he entered the tower, he did not come back. He is currently the only Army chaplain assistant to lose his life during the terrorist attacks.<sup>8</sup>

Today, the duties of a 56M go far beyond that of a waiter, school teacher, driver, administrative assistant, or musician. Chaplain assistants must provide religious support for all Soldiers of every religion, provide or coordinate force protection wherever the Unit Ministry Team may go, coordinate Traumatic Event Management, manage property, facilities, and programs, and much more. Currently, chaplain assistants are deploying in support of the Global War on Terror. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, chaplain assistant SFC Fredrick D. Murphy set the bar high. Murphy escorted the chaplains to and from religious services and other meetings throughout Iraq. He was critical to the religious support mission not only to his unit, but to the Air Force, Navy, Marines, and civilians within his sector. He was additionally responsible for the success of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD) for the entire Task Force by Navy and Marine psychiatrists. Murphy was awarded the Bronze Star for his superlative actions.<sup>9</sup>

Although there are no 56Ms who have lost their lives to enemy action during GWOT, memorial websites show at least two special duty chaplain assistants gave their lives in the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When I decided to write an article on the history of the chaplain's assistant, I didn't realize how difficult it would be to find information and photographs on the topic. Needless to say, one of the greatest virtues of chaplain assistants is their ability to serve selflessly. Many of their deeds go unnoticed, unrewarded, and fail to be mentioned or highlighted in the annals of history. However, glory is not what drives the "servant of the servants of God," it is the reward of helping others that motivates them.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1978), 182.

<sup>2</sup>Pictures of Assistant Chaplain, and later Chaplain, Thomas Quinn are on file at the Army History and Education Center in Carlisle, Pa.

<sup>3</sup>Transcript of Chaplain W.W. Meech's Letters (1862), courtesy of Ms. Marcia McManus, Director of the U.S. Army Chaplain Museum, Fort Jackson, SC.

<sup>4</sup>Earl F. Stover, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 48.

<sup>5</sup>Earl F. Stover, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 135.

<sup>6</sup>General Orders No. 37, War Department 1919 at Home of Heroes Website (homeofheroes.com), Distinguished Service Cross: Alphabetical listing.

<sup>7</sup>Christopher Cross and William R. Arnold, *Soldiers of God* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1945), p.153.

<sup>8</sup>Nella M. and Michael W. Hobson (eds.) *Courageous in Spirit, Compassionate in Service: The Gunhus Years, 1999-2003* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 2003), p. 124.

<sup>9</sup>John W. Brinsfield and Kenneth E. Lawson, *A History of the United States Army Chaplaincy: The Hicks Years, 2003-2007* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 2007), p. 298.



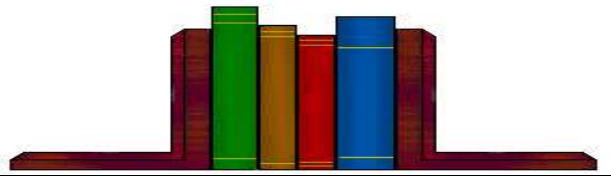
*Sergeant First Class Naomi L. Rankins is currently assigned as an Operations/Platoon Sergeant for the Chaplain's Basic Officer Leader Course, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, S.C. Her military education includes the Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course, Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course, Primary Leadership Development Course, Army Staff and Faculty Course, Fund Clerk Course, and Combat Lifesaver Course. Her civilian education include an Associate of Arts and Sciences degree from Pierce College, Bachelor of Arts in English from Chaminade University of Honolulu, and is currently working toward a Masters in English.*

# Chaplaincy Spiritual Renewal Retreats Lake Junaluska, NC 2009





# Book Reviews



## A Broad Place - An Autobiography

By Jurgen Moltmann, translated by Margaret Kohl  
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008

“Post-Traumatic Growth” is a positive term used by our Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Center to describe helpful development and progress which can occur after trauma invades one’s life. German theologian Jurgen Moltmann’s recent autobiography, *A Broad Place*, is an excellent illustration of Post-Traumatic Growth.

A formative period in Professor Moltmann’s life was his time as a Soldier during and immediately after World War II. Experiencing the nearby death of his friend during a firestorm in Hamburg in 1943, the young Moltmann asked “Why am I alive, and not dead like the others?” (p. 381) He experienced mental and spiritual torment while a Prisoner of War near Ostend, Belgium. Later interned within a Scottish Prisoner of War camp, Moltmann felt depression brought on by wartime destruction and seemingly endless captivity. Then, confronted with pictures of Buchenwald, a “feeling of profound shame at having to share in shouldering the disgrace of one’s own people...the weight of it has never left me to the present day.” (p. 29) Yet, despite the overwhelming weight of all these events, the kindness he experienced in friendly encounters with Scottish working families, and the gift of a Bible from a chaplain enabled Moltmann to experience positive spiritual growth out of the trauma of war.

This autobiography is exceptionally helpful to Unit Ministry Teams in the following ways:

**Understanding** - In reading this book, we discover foundations for Moltmann’s influential text *The Theology of Hope*. A productive, combative hope available to the poor, assailed, forsaken and imprisoned (all of which Moltmann experienced during the War) underlies much of his

theology. In *The Crucified God*, he addresses themes of abandonment “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” stirred by memories of concentration camp victims. His work on the Kingdom of God, going beyond words and into the world of politics, society and culture, addresses areas of disquiet found in the church’s mute voice during Nazi Germany. And, his focus as a systematic theologian, trying to understand the individual in the context of the whole, is helpful for our theological education.

**Resources** - The text contains many personal stories, experiences and illustrations that can bring color and life to sermons, studies, talks and classes chaplains and chaplain assistants may lead. The post-wartime perspective in dealing with personal and national trauma is exceptionally helpful in building spiritual resilience and steadfastness. Likewise, Moltmann’s positive “standing on the threshold of possibilities” (p. 285) attitude brings freshness of insight and can infuse new energy into our thinking and person in whatever stage of life we may find ourselves.

**Challenge** - This autobiography challenges members of Unit Ministry Teams in a number of ways. Now in our eighth year of war, do we offer our Soldiers and Family Members opportunities to grow deeply and with rigor when seeking to answer the harder questions that are raised by our OEF/OIF experiences? Are we cultivating settings whereby future “Professor Moltmanns” may flourish and grow as a result of God’s Spirit working within the lives and wartime circumstances of our Soldiers? Do our Detainee Operations Centers in Bagram, Kandahar, Bucca and Tikrit provide opportunities for moral and intellectual growth for detainees similar to that provided POW Moltmann within Scottish POW camps in 1945-1947? (pp. 30-35) Are we “stretching the minds” of our parishioners to address the hard questions brought on by war, and offering God’s steady hope and peace in the

process?

*A Broad Place* is part travel journal, part summation and critique of Moltmann's theology, and throughout a personal narrative and autobiography that offers distinct clarity that moves and inspires.

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*Reviewed by Chaplain (COL) Kenneth Sampson, Command Chaplain, Army Material Command, Fort Belvoir, Va.*

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### **You Don't Have to be Wrong for Me to be Right -- Finding Faith Without Fanaticism**

By Brad Hirschfield  
New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009

"...a guide to our common humanity, a source of strength and stamina and hope" writes Rabbi Hirschfield, referring in his introduction to the purpose of *You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right*. This helpful book by a former West Bank activist and current president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership is especially appropriate for chaplains and chaplain assistants. While shying away from "interfaith pablum," and "happy hands-across-the-water" inclusive schemes focusing on lowest common denominator thinking, the author seeks to "nurture our ability to make deep commitments while remaining open to new ideas and new experiences." (p. 11)

Unit Ministry Teams and Religious Educators would benefit from a thorough study of this highly readable text. Whether issues of world religions, interdenominational practice, or implications of pressing issues of the day (religious leader liaison, "don't ask, don't tell" policies...) this popularly written book is beneficial in the following ways:

**Civility and Thoughtfulness** - Wrestling with the ideas and wonderful personal illustrations presented in the book invites us to respond to others with receptivity, curiosity and openness. Like the Apostle Paul, who "voluntarily became a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralist, loose-living immoralist, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever" (I Corinthians 9:19 *The*

*Message*) our servant-leadership can express itself through tempered, thoughtful encounters. The author describes "mean-spirited" and "small-minded" confrontational designs that too often fuel intolerance and "fierce faith." He recognizes the need we have to assert ourselves and be true to our respective faith traditions (or lack of tradition). Yet, demonstrating thoughtful civility, finding our points of connection with others, and living out our obligations to engage beyond our own church or tribe, go a long way toward building a more secure, stable world.

**Connectedness with Others** - We routinely build harmony and understanding with Soldiers and Family Members within our units and installations. To further connect with those both within and outside the Army community with whom we may disagree, or with whom we may have little in common, it is helpful to see the "image of God" in all His children. This reverential focus sees every human life as having value, uniqueness, and equality. It is a perspective demonstrating compassion, seeking first to understand the person before us, rather than initially mining the ideology that individual may hold dear. The underlying camaraderie we experience, a demonstration of unity without demanding uniformity, goes far to promote opportunities for mutual growth, understanding and empathetic involvement.

**Self-awareness** - This book raises many questions that may deepen our faith and build our interactions with others. Do we have a tendency to treat "all who challenge us as dangerous enemies?" (p. 8) How comfortable are we in living with mystery? Can we confront the evil within ourselves and our world, yet possess a gentle confidence when ideas and interpretations may cause conflict? Is it possible to serve with conviction and commitment, maintaining our personal integrity, while fostering an accepting climate of openness for dialogue and understanding?

*You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right* is a stimulating, practical book aimed at increasing understanding, dialogue and community. When paired with Gustav Niebuhr's *Beyond Tolerance—Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America*

(New York: Penguin, 2008), it can help UMTs mulling over difficulties discussed in these “world-class” resources to bolster competency and care in these increasingly complex yet exceptionally fulfilling days.

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*Reviewed by Chaplain (COL) Kenneth Sampson, Command Chaplain, Army Material Command, Fort Belvoir, Va.*

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### **Faith Under Fire: An Army Chaplain’s Memoir**

By Roger Benimoff, with Eve Conant  
Crown Publishing, 2009

This is the amazing story of former Army Chaplain Roger Benimoff’s resilience that the world first realized in a *Newsweek* article published on May 7, 2000. That article referenced his personal story and daily journal. It helped to change the military’s understanding of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Currently, there is acceptance of all Soldiers needing to decompress and get mutual care in the Army system during and after war.

Just because the chaplain does not use a gun does not mean they see nothing or that the Soldiers of their care in battle mean less to them. Benimoff became a Christian at eight-years-old and then an enlisted Soldier after high school. In college, he developed a deeper relationship with Jesus. That brought him into marriage with Rebekah and the birth of their two sons. With this commitment to the Lord, he attended seminary and required residence before becoming an Army chaplain in 2002.

While on active duty, Benimoff deployed to Iraq twice in a three-year period. Upon his second arrival, there were five Soldiers killed in his unit before he unpacked. Later in the deployment, one Soldier he counseled for several months before they redeployed married, had a child and died just before returning home. Benimoff rode in an M1A1 tank one day and found it was hit the next day where he had sat. He also had sniper shots come close to him and fear amongst many of his Soldiers

about what was next in Iraq.

During his second deployment, he became completely involved into missions and one time could not understand why he could not go with the forward units. He finally came to understand that he was one chaplain representing 1000 Soldiers in his task force and that made him irreplaceable to the command.

During this second deployment, he received orders to do Clinical Pastoral Education at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after returning home. He also was given the task of coming home early to create assimilation training for all Soldiers in his task force upon return to Fort Hood.

He did not realize while deployed that he needed to decompress and go through self- and mutual-care. He just kept his mind on the Soldiers’ needs. This brought him to not be able to cope at home and to he began to hate people, mistrust crowds and busy roads. He tried to cope by going on ever-longer fitness runs, which were never enough. Benimoff needed to open up and decompress by talking through his war experiences and adjusting that reality to life at home.

Being assigned to Walter Reed and CPE was actually the worst place for him to be assigned, because every day he saw PTSD in new wounded Soldiers, it reminded him of feeling defenseless in Iraq. This brought about his tension with Theodicy, the reality of evil in society, and with our benevolent God. He personally had to pick certain areas of the 113 acre campus he could cope in.

This continuous mission mentality, without needed decompressing vacations and not being away from the Army, literally drove him crazy. At this point, he had to check into a Coatesville, Va., hospital for several months to unwind, before a possible suicide and survivor’s remorse. He learned to cope in understanding he and others were forced into an impossible situation and they achieved a form of peace in Tal Afar, Iraq. He also talks through events now with others.

Although his wife had made a commitment to marriage for life, as stated in Matthew 19, his problems with PTSD almost caused them to divorce. He originally lost faith and the

compassionate understanding in God with him thinking he had done it all himself while watching so many Soldiers dead and hurt.

Through all this, at his lowest point he has repented and gave it all over to Jesus. The renewed relationship is possible with dependence in Jesus.

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*Reviewed by Chaplain Candidate (MAJ) Jeffrey Dreher. Dreher has prior service with the 101st Airborne Division in Operation Desert Storm. He is finishing seminary and lives in Kenosha, Wis.*

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## **The Future of the Army Profession**

Edited by Lloyd J. Matthews  
McGraw Hill Primis, 2002 and 2005

*The Future of the Army Profession* is an anthology of essays written for Army officers, service school instructors, West Point cadets, and anyone else interested in the study of military professionalism. Seven sections in the 2002 edition include 25 chapters that address a wide range of topics including the definition and application of professionalism as applied to military service, as well as ethical, leadership, and management insights from a number of scholars and senior officers.

One chapter, entitled “Reality Check: The Human and Spiritual Needs of Soldiers and How to Prepare Them for Combat” (reprinted in this edition, with permission) should be of particular interest to chaplains and chaplain assistants. The editors made sure this chapter was updated and included in the second edition of the book, published in 2005.

Several historical insights within the “Reality Check” chapter are worthy of note because they address the topics of training, resiliency, morale, and the value of religious support in combat. For example, John Keegan in his book, *Face of Battle*, which was quoted frequently in one section of the article, observed that during the Battle of France in 1940, of all the British casualties, “ten to fifteen per cent were psychiatric, ten to twenty percent during the first ten days of the Normandy battle and eleven

percent in the first two months of the Italian campaign” (p.407). The official American report on combat exhaustion during the same period in World War II reported that “There is no such thing as ‘getting used to combat.’ Each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of their exposure [thus] psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds in warfare. Most men were ineffective after 180 or even 140 days.”

Keegan, however, identified four critical elements in British armies that helped soldiers cope and endure extended combat action: 1) moral purpose—the belief that the war was just and necessary; 2) unit cohesion—formed in hard training, sports competitions, and rewards for victory; 3) selfless leadership from first-line officers; and 4) a desire for spiritual or religious fortification before battle.

Supporting Keegan’s observations was a U.S. War Department survey of 1,433 veteran enlisted infantrymen taken in Italy in 1945. Some 84 percent of privates and 88 percent of the noncommissioned officers said that prayer helped them more “when the going got rough” than unit cohesion, the cause they were fighting for, or hatred for the enemy (p.408). The survey did not claim that Soldiers became more interested in formal religion, but it did suggest that combat had a marked effect on Soldiers’ spiritual attitudes.

I recommend *The Future of the Army Profession* (2002 or 2005 edition) to all chaplains and chaplain assistants who want to get a deeper understanding of 1) the impact of extended combat deployments on Soldiers and 2) how unit ministry teams can realistically address stress and resiliency before, during, and after combat deployments. General George Marshall’s warning, “unless the Soldier’s soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end” should be a reminder that our spiritual mission is of critical importance.

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*Reviewed by Dr. John W. Brinsfield, the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Historian.*

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## **The Lord's Supper – Five Views: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, Pentecostal**

Gordon T. Smith, Editor  
IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2008

For this volume Gordon T. Smith used contributions written by seminary professors representing the listed denominations. The book follows the common pattern allowing each contributor about 20 pages to present their position. Each writer also gives a two-page response to each of the contributions of others.

In the introduction Smith claims, "Representatives from five theological traditions speak here about the meaning of the Lord's Supper from within that tradition." That is basically a true statement but not quite. Unfortunately, the writers frequently embed defenses within their essays. Rather than being completely straightforward "this is what we believe and do," the reader is often faced with "this is what other people believe about us but they are mistaken." Roger E. Olson (Baptist) spends the first three pages of his essay explaining why no one can present a Baptist view. He then writes the remainder of his essay from the negative – "this is what Baptists believe the Lord's Supper is not."

In spite of the shortfalls, this volume has potential. Its initial appeal will be to students in a systematic theology class. This book can also be of value to the chaplain who desires a quick summary of some of the most frequently encountered beliefs about the Lord's Supper. Reading this book will correct much commonly accepted misinformation about other denomination's beliefs.

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*Reviewed by Chaplain (CPT) Steven G. Rindahl, assigned to Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Fort Gordon, Ga.*

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## **Religion and the Utah War, 1857-1858**

By Chaplain (LTC) Kenneth E. Lawson

"There was a war out in Utah, when?" asked the Chapel's senior chaplain assistant as he stood

over my desk looking at Lawson's book with a puzzled look on his face. The words by this chaplain assistant echo the words of U.S. Army Chaplain (LTC) Kenneth E. Lawson as he lays the foundation for this short, but little known war, in our nations' history.

Lawson sets forth his premise early in his book telling us, "The Utah War was the first civil war within the United States, as U.S. citizens fought against each other for both religious and political freedom." He takes the reader back into the 19th century with a synopsis of religion in America in the mid-1800's. I found the synopsis valuable. For I, like many in America, were taught our spiritual and religious focus during the mid-1800's to be on the issue of slavery. Slavery, as I was taught, was foremost in America's heart and mind. It was slavery that leads us into the Civil War. But Lawson shows there was another important issue at this time. That issue being the rise of Mormonism and its westward movement.

Lawson retraces the Mormon movement westward as LDS citizens establish their homes in Utah. Then Lawson demonstrates how tensions began to build and how this led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre. The massacre ensued as troops deployed, and the Mormons, thinking them to be spies, took up arms and the first Civil War in the U.S. begins.

One may ask, "What is the purpose in studying this little known war today?" My reply, and I suppose that of Chaplain Lawson to be, "have you turned on the evening news lately?" Do we not see opposing political systems at war with each other? Do we know any nation or faction willing to fight a bigger, stronger enemy and be willing to die for their beliefs? Lawson's book shows us that religion and religious belief will always be a key factor in war. His re-look into history can help us today answer the question as to why men fight.

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*Reviewed by Chaplain (LTC) David H. Hann, garrison chaplain at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.*

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# Editor's Notes

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If you are reading this, by now you have probably been through the latest issue of your regimental professional bulletin, *The Army Chaplaincy*.

I'd like to thank all of the authors who contributed to this Spiritual Resilience issue. Without their willingness to contribute to this worthy subject, there would be no publication. For this issue, special thanks goes to Chaplain (COL) Mike Dugal, director of the Center for Spiritual Leadership at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, who wrote "Spiritual Resiliency and the Senior Chaplain's Role" for this issue and served as our subject matter expert after his arrival. Chaplain (LTC) Randy Edwards, the CSL Deputy, also contributed to the production of this issue.

Submissions for the next issue should be on the theme of "**Preaching and Worship Leadership.**" All articles, along with photos or graphics, submitted for consideration should be sent in Microsoft Word format (with no page breaks) to [steve.hoover@us.army.mil](mailto:steve.hoover@us.army.mil). When submitting art, photos, or charts and graphs for the article, please be sure to submit them separately and not embedded in the document.

All submissions should include: each author's name, postal mailing address and phone number, email address, followed by a short biography (including your current position). Also, please include a photograph in JPEG format to place at the end of the article with your bio.

When submitting book reviews, keep in mind that the book needs to have been published within the past two years. Book reviews are usually 200 to 250 words in length, but depending on the subject, can be longer. Provide the full title of the book, the author or editor, publisher, date, hardcover or paperback and number of pages. Reviewers should include their full name, mailing address, email, phone and where assigned or located. Please check previous issues for book review format or contact Steve Hoover at [steve.hoover@us.army.mil](mailto:steve.hoover@us.army.mil).

Respectfully,

Christopher H. Wisdom  
Chaplain (COL) USA  
Editor-in-Chief

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# Dedication to Chaplain (MAJ) Timothy Vakoc

Chaplain (MAJ) Timothy Vakoc, a Catholic priest and native of Minnesota, who was seriously injured in Iraq in 2004, died June 20.

Known to almost everyone he met as “Father Tim,” he was the first chaplain grievously wounded in Iraq.

Before his passing, he had been living at the St. Therese of New Hope (Minn.) nursing facility. He lost an eye and sustained brain damage when a roadside bomb exploded near his Humvee on May 29, 2004, as he was returning to FOB Diamondback after celebrating mass for Soldiers in the field.

Chaplain (MAJ) Jeff Burbank, currently the Capabilities Force Integration Division chief at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, was assigned with Vakoc when he was injured.

“I had not worked with Tim prior to this, but it did not take long in that environment to get to know him,” Burbank said. “It was difficult to walk with him across



**Chaplain (MAJ) Timothy Vakoc**

the FOB to the dining facility because he had to greet, talk and give ‘the handshake’ to every Soldier he came across. Though the route normally taken was a straight line, Tim chose to cover every motor pool, tool shed and staff office, before finally getting to lunch.”

Even when he was promoted to major, Burbank said “the Soldier

was the centerpiece why he served.” Vakoc’s chaplain assistant, now Corporal Nathan A. Copas, pinned on the new rank.

Chaplains Vakoc and

Burbank worked together in the planning and construction of Liberty Chapel, which was located across from the hospital.

“We began holding services and the date for the dedication was set,” Burbank said. “We even had a cake ordered for the event. Then, the day of the dedication, Tim was injured.

“There are still days, five years later, that I miss Tim,” Burbank said. “He was unsurpassed in his passion to connect to Soldiers wherever they were. He would travel anywhere to offer Mass, even if only a few Soldiers attended. The Soldiers, Chaplain Corps, the Army and the world is a better place because of the sacrificial service of Chaplain Tim Vakoc.”

After numerous surgeries and life-threatening infections, he slowly started to recognize friends and family, and to communicate with a squeeze of the hand or a slight smile.

For more than two years, he was in what doctors called a minimally responsive state. Then, in the fall of 2006, he spoke for the first time in two-and-a-half years, raising hopes for recovery.

Deputy Chief of Chaplains (BG) Donald L. Rutherford, who recruited Vakoc, recalled meeting the then 34-year-old priest. He described Vakoc as “young, very outgoing and friendly...just what the Army was looking for to help fill the Chaplain Corps.”

Rutherford attended the funeral, performing military honors at Fort Snelling, where Vakoc was buried June 26.

Vakoc celebrated the 17th anniversary of his ordination on June 10.



**Chaplain (MAJ) Timothy Vakoc, shown here conducting a Christmas morning Mass in 2003, died June 20, 2009, after an almost five-year battle from injuries caused by an Improvised Explosive Device. (Photos courtesy of the Vakoc Family and Caringbridge.org)**

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