



NCMAF / ECVAC

Newsletter

*News and Resources for
Military and Veterans Affairs
Endorsers and Chaplains*

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*A publication of the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF)
and the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincies (ECVAC)*

*"I didn't lose my legs; I gave them for the defense of my country."
Allen Clark,
Vietnam Veteran in his address to the ECVAC Annual Conference*

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To change and to change for the better are two different things. This old German proverb describes much of my thought as I watch the current election cycle and review the recent NCMAF Annual Conference.

It seems everyone is focused on change. I do believe change can be a good thing. Our religious traditions encourage us to change in our habits to more perfectly reflect the teachings and examples provided us in our various faiths. We are encouraged to change in our use of resources to preserve more energy to help our world remain a friendlier place to live. We are encouraged to change in our daily activities to overcome vices which rob us of health. All of these changes are changes for the better.

Much of what we heard at this year's conference falls in this category of good change. Whether it was David Kinnaman speaking of the change needed to minister to the young men and women entering our services, Bill Carr speaking of the change in DoD and the VA regarding care for disabled Vets, Bob Tuttle and Skip Lupu speaking of changing our thinking to keep up with modern legal thought on First Amendment and Chaplaincy issues, or Jim Daniels and Rich Kuhlbars speaking of change in methods in providing services to veterans making the transition to civilian life, all of these speakers also represented good change.

But then there are some things that do not change. One is the need for a strong and vibrant military chaplaincy representing the faith traditions of our nation. This will never change as long as we maintain standing forces. Another is the need for our chaplains to truly represent their sending bodies. This cannot change or their service will lack strength and credibility. And yet another is the need to recognize how our chaplaincy service is a privilege and not a right and our goal is to serve the needs of others. This too cannot change for if it does, we will soon find that we will no longer have a home in our nation's armed forces.

Perhaps even more pressing than all the above is the fact that men and women returning from war will find their transition to civilian society is often fraught with difficulty and disappointment. This is a strong motivator for us as representatives of our respective faith communities to do what we can to assist in this process of change, to make it good change. The chaplain services of the VA hospitals work with civilian clergy to equip them to participate in a meaningful and informed way. The Military Chaplains Association is endeavoring to coordinate activities of retired chaplains in providing ministry where the active component cannot reach. Local Reserve and National Guard units and service organizations provide opportunities for teaming to leverage their ability to meet needs. Please be involved in changing the response of our faith communities for the better, changing it to one more active than ever before that we truly welcome our veterans home in a manner which fits the sacrifice they have made.

Collegially,

Herman Keizer



Letter from ECVAC Chairman Hugh Morgan

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“Chaplain and Doctor Meet”

When we, as endorsers, were in the Pentagon on January 10, 2008, to meet with the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, we were given a powerful statement about the value of military chaplains that was written personally by Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He had written this about chaplains, "You are the ear we want to bend, the helping hand we want to grasp, and the broad shoulder upon which we want to lean. You serve us and our spiritual needs every bit as much as you serve the national security needs of this great country."

What can be said of active duty, guard, and reserve military chaplains who serve in the current war against global terrorism, can be equally said of our VA hospital chaplains, some 833 strong, who minister daily to provide for the spiritual care of our veterans in 152 Medical Centers, and 120 Extended Care Units (Nursing Homes) across this nation.

Our returning veterans are facing the War after the War. Many of them will suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many will need to find forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and learn to forgive themselves. These young men and women are all volunteers and Great Americans. They are a vital part of the new wave of the Second Greatest Generation. This year we will have 25 million veterans, many of whom may not seek the kind of care they need. In 2007, 6 million veterans were treated in the Veteran Administration Medical Centers.

In his State of the Union Speech, on January 28, 2008, President George W. Bush said, "America is a force for hope in the world because we are a compassionate people, and some of the most compassionate Americans are those who have stepped forward to protect us. We must keep faith with all who have risked life and limb so that we might live in freedom and peace. Over the past seven years, we've increased funding for veterans by more than 95 percent. And as we increase funding we must also reform our veterans system to meet the needs of a new war and a new generation. I call on the Congress to enact the reforms recommended by Senator Bob Dole and Secretary Donna Shalala, so we can improve the system of care for our wounded warriors and help them build lives of hope and promise and dignity."

The National VA Chaplain Center is located in Hampton, VA. "Their mission statement is to empower Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplains in the achievement of excellence in meeting the spiritual healthcare needs of Veterans."

We, as endorsers, need to assist them, in fulfilling this worthy mission for meeting the spiritual needs of our veterans. We can do that best by visiting our own VA chaplains as well as chaplains of other faith groups to encourage them in their ministries.

As a former acting, certified CPE Supervisor in the Air Force, I remember the book that [Dr. Granger E. Westberg](#) wrote in the early 60s, entitled, [Minister and Doctor Meet](#). His approach was to merge faith with medicine in a holistic healing process that involved chaplains and doctors in their ministry to the whole man: body, mind, soul and spirit. I was privileged to know Granger Westberg personally and have him help me when I was the Director, Pastoral Care and Counseling at the Regional Medical Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. At that time he was teaching at Wittenberg University, in Springfield, Ohio. We did monthly seminars/workshops together where doctors, including psychiatrists and psychologists, and nurses joined with chaplains at command and wing level for dialogue about total care for our patients.

It is my goal to visit several VA Medical Centers this year, meet with administrators, the head chaplains, and other chaplains. I realize that I need to learn more about the work and ministry of our VA hospital chaplains, and to crystallize my thinking so I can represent you with understanding and competence. Let us join together in praying for our chaplains of all faiths who minister to our veterans.

Collegially,

[Hugh H. Morgan](#)



Annual Conferences

Chaplaincy and the New Generation

Mr. David Kinnaman, President and Strategic Leader of the Barna Group authored *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity... and Why it Matters* in 2007. In his duties at Barna he has spent the last three years conducting research for all types of Christian organizations interested in better understanding themselves and those to whom they seek to minister. This book is his attempt to describe how those not part of the Christian church view Christianity in America today. By extension, his insights apply to many other communities of faith.

Mr. Kinnaman's address related the issues he believes to be important to the military chaplaincy. Mr. Kinnaman believes chaplains are critical to changing the spiritual climate of America. Because of the demographic to whom they minister, chaplains are dealing with the very people that often are overlooked or are neglected by mainline religious communities. Chaplains also provide ministry in a pluralistic setting and have opportunity to evidence what a life of faith can mean to those who have formed negative images of those who take religion seriously based on their own observations.

Kinnaman summarized his thoughts on the opportunity of chaplaincy in four major points. The first was for chaplains not to "lose their edge" for the sake of keeping the status quo. There is always a tension between meeting expectations to preserve a certain image and going beyond to meet the needs of the men and women we are called to serve. Keep the edge on ministry. Secondly, realize that change is inevitable. Kinnaman details many of the changes the Barna Group has discovered among both Busters and Mosaics in his book. He and others at the Barna Group believe there will be major disruptions to the way in which men and women of faith will express their faith in the years to come. This could result in re-thinking that which is essential and that which is simply customary. Oftentimes chaplains are in an environment to recognize these changing patterns and both participate and guide them as they mature. Thirdly, chaplains will need heroic leadership to navigate chaplain programs into the future. With the changes occurring and there will be new models, new relationships, new uses of technology, and new means of integrating faith with mission. Chaplains will need to focus on what is important to the generation they support in their day to day ministry. Finally, chaplains are incubators and models of real world interfaith partnerships and friendships that many people do not see in the world outside the military. For Mosaics, their primary moral compass tends to be found in friendships. As they witness and experience the friendships that are lived by chaplains, they may catch a glimpse of what it is to be solid in one's own faith while not rejecting the friendship of others.



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Reforming the Military Disability Evaluation System



Mr. Bill Carr is assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, serving as the Deputy Under Secretary (Military Personnel Policy) since August 2002. He oversees recruiting, retention, compensation, and related human resource management for the 1.4 million active duty military members of the U.S. Armed Services.

Mr. Carr addressed the Conference on the ongoing efforts to reform the military disability evaluation system and ensuring those wounded in service to our nation receive the best possible care. This care must be available not only on the battle field but at home as well.

All are familiar with issues that came to the public's attention in 2006 when stories of neglect and scandal were reported from Walter Reed Medical Center regarding the care of wounded soldiers. The Departments of Defense and Veteran's Affairs have come together to reform their disability system partially in response to some of the weaknesses that were made known through this and other issues that have come to light in the last several years. Mr. Carr explained a pilot program is in place in the District of Columbia and will soon be exported to the rest of the nation once known to be effective.

According to Mr. Carr, the statistics for successful treatment of those wounded in current conflicts in Southwest Asia are remarkable in light of history. Of those wounded over 98% survive. Of those who survive their

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wounds, 95% are treated and returned to duty with their units. Of the remainder who are evacuated from the theater, 10% are eventually treated and returned to full duty. The remainders are evaluated by a Physical Evaluation Board to determine if they can return to duty or are eligible for medical separation. Once this has been determined even if eligible for separation, the military will make room for those who want to stay and contribute in whatever capacity they can to the end of their tour of duty.

In an innovative partnership between the VA and DoD, the new system has all service members being medically separated evaluated by VA medical personnel to determine their disability. The military services accept the VA determination when deciding upon the discharge procedures. This process eliminates time, expense, and confusion for the wounded veteran on discharge as they are already included in the VA system. This new partnership is expected to reduce a great deal of anxiety and misunderstanding for both the service members and their families during the difficult transition process.

Mr. Carr expressed optimism with the new system and pledged to continue to monitor it and seek improvement as he can. He also acknowledged the important contributions made not only by military chaplains but also America's communities of faith in supporting the men and women of the military both during their time of service and in their times of transition to the civilian community.

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Instruments of Accommodation: The Military Chaplaincy and the Constitution

[Dr. Robert Tuttle](#) and [Professor Ira Lupu](#), Professors of Law and Religion, George Washington University Law School, addressed the Conference on the subject of Instruments of Accommodation: The Military Chaplaincy and the Constitution. Most are familiar with the legal challenge to the military chaplaincy found in [KATCOFF v. MARSH](#). Professors Tuttle and Lupu have sought to update issues surrounding the Constitutionality of the military chaplaincy as much has changed on the legal scene with regards to the First Amendment since this most famous legal challenge. Their address to the Conference focused on their findings regarding the current legal issues as well as providing insight into both a path for analysis of the issues and a path for public policy to ensure provision of ministry.

A path for analysis – Dr. Tuttle provided four criteria by which current legal reasoning evaluates government accommodation of religious practices. First, any such accommodation is permissible only if it is responding to an imposition imposed by the government. Any such relief must be directly in response to the burden imposed. The chaplaincy is in response to burdens imposed on service member's as they are subject to military orders and regulations and may be denied access to regular religious services due to their military service. Secondly, the accommodation must facilitate private religious conduct determined by the person seeking relief. The chaplaincy seeks to abide by this provision by facilitating the faith of all members of the military and not forcing any to participate in unwanted or unwelcomed religious services. The third consideration in any government supplied accommodation requires it to be religiously neutral and available to all. This builds on the second criteria and is a reason why the chaplaincy avoids any appearance of the establishment of religion in its practices and guidelines. The chaplaincy must remain religiously neutral to remain within the bounds of the Constitution. The fourth consideration for accommodation is recognition that any such accommodation cannot impose a burden on third parties not involved in the accommodation process. An example of this is that providing for the needs of one religious group cannot detract from the quality of life provisions provided to others who are not of the same faith group.

A path for policy - Professor Lupu emphasized some of the implications of these accommodations specifically regarding military chaplaincy. He emphasized above all recognition that chaplains are provided to accommodate felt religious needs and are not provided to protect the rights of chaplains. Chaplains must be aware of and concerned about their status as officers in providing for the religious needs of military members and ensure they are providing from their religious identities. Professor Lupu encouraged Endorsing Agents to consider this requirement in a variety of contexts. The first was the provision of faith group worship. In such worship services conducted in accord with the chaplains own faith traditions, a "minimal pluralism" should be considered so as to not denigrate the legitimacy of members of other faiths in their rights to serve and be recognized as citizens of the nation. The second context is in the provision of ceremonial prayers. During such events chaplains are considered to be



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engaging in “official speech” and are not permitted to advance or promote exclusive faiths. The third context to consider according to Lupu is in the area of pastoral care and the potential conflict for chaplains between retaining the right to evangelize and the requirement to respect the religious autonomy of those seeking counsel.

Both Dr. Tuttle and Professor Lupu emphasized the sensitivity of current First Amendment standing to the needs of service members and not necessarily to the institutions providing chaplains. The abstract of their paper and information on downloading the full text is available at the [Social Science Research Network](#).



Project Soldier Help

[Jim Daniels](#) and [Richard Kuhlbars](#) addressed the Conference on their ministry of Healing the Soul: A Self Guide to our Own Healing. Recognizing that today’s veterans live in a fast paced society in which many of the traditional bonds to community and family are no longer easily accessible, this program takes advantage of new technology to provide help with transition from the front lines to the front stoop. Through self-directed and repeatable PC-based software participants are able to reflect on how the wounds of war are affecting their personal relationships, financial issues, career development, personal habits, leisure activities, spiritual values, and decision making. The program helps the veteran to think, clarify, and apply personal life solutions to painful wounding with the soul that impedes happiness and peace in life. Daniels and Kuhlbars are working with corporations and organizations to buy the software and place it in the hands of veterans across the nation.



Additionally, Daniels and Kuhlbars, along with Emily Kuhlbars Howden, have authored the book [Silent Wounds: The Hidden Cost of War](#) about the effects war has on the whole person and the whole family and impact of silent wounding.



From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



We couldn’t defend this nation without our Chaplains, Chaplain Assistants/Religious Program Specialists. The compassionate care you provide our fighting men and women --and their families -- remains vital to our combat readiness.

You are the ear we want to bend, the helping hand we want to grasp, the broad shoulder upon which we want to lean. You serve us and our spiritual needs every bit as much as you serve the national security needs of this great country.

Thank you for that service, and for the courage -- physical and moral -- you demonstrate every day at sea, on the ground and in the air. On behalf of all those with whom and for whom you tread in harm’s way, I salute you.

MIKE MULLEN
Admiral, United States Navy
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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Pictures from the Annual Conference



Chaplaincy News

Military chaplains: Being a cog of conscience in the military killing machine

By Lee Lawrence | Correspondent of *The Christian Science Monitor* from the November 20, 2007 edition

Kabul, Afghanistan - It's the end of lunchtime at the Afghan National Army base of Pol-i-charkhi and, as the mess hall reverberates with the dish-clatter and chair-scraping of soldiers in dark camouflage dispersing, two men linger behind, still digging with spoons into a shared dish of rice and lamb.

US Navy Capt. James Fisher is the guest of Afghan Col. Moheb Moheburahman. The American is fair skinned, every inch of his face and scalp clean-shaven, and with ready smile and can-do attitude, he looks downright sunny. The Afghan has an olive complexion and a full black beard flecked with gray. When he laughs, the white of his teeth brightens his face like a flash of lightning in a night sky. The American has never borne arms in battle; the Afghan spent years in the mountains of northern Afghanistan



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fighting as a mujahideen against Russian occupiers and, later, against the Taliban. A limp in his walk and a cloudy left eye are leftovers from a Taliban ambush.

Both men are officers, both are clergy, and neither could have imagined joining forces when they made religion the cornerstone of their life and work: Colonel Moheburahman as an Islamic mullah trained in Kabul and now serving in the Afghan Army; Captain Fisher a born-again Christian ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church and committed to ministering to American troops.

As they eat and talk, an interpreter in a gray suit and yellow tie bridges the linguistic divide through word and gesture. Nothing, not even the smiles and the ribbing, gets lost as the two discuss the transformation of the Religious Cultural Affairs (RCA) department of the Afghan Army into a professional military chaplaincy.

Against the complex backdrop of combat and nation-building, this is neither a simple task nor always an exciting one. "I bet that, 25 years ago, the colonel didn't say 'I want to be a staff officer,' " Chaplain Fisher jokes.

The above article is but one of six, all of which may be found at [Military Chaplains, Tour of Higher Duty](#). Here is the description of the series. "They carry no guns, yet US military chaplains are considered a force multiplier in the war theater. Today, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military expects chaplains to meet the spiritual needs of troops. But it also recognizes their importance in everything from counseling the young soldier crying in his bunk over a Dear John letter to being a leveling moral presence among troops trained to fight and kill. Reporter Lee Lawrence spent three months with dozens of military chaplains in Iraq and Afghanistan. She profiles six of them in a weekly series."

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CJTF-HOA chaplain meets with Minister for Muslim Affairs

Story by: Army Sgt. Charles Siler CJTF-HOA Public Affairs

DJIBOUTI – The Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa chaplain met with the Minister for Muslim Affairs to strengthen their working relationship and coordinate the distribution of clothing and other goods to Djibouti’s destitute at the minister’s office in Djibouti, Dec. 10.



Chaplain (Cmdr.) Walt Dinkins, CJTF-HOA chaplain, has been meeting regularly with Mogue Samatar, the Djiboutian minister for Muslim Affairs, and they have formed a friendship around their religious convictions and mutual support.

It’s important to go out into the community and meet with key religious and education leaders, and get a sense of the need in their areas, said Dinkins. This helps us determine how we can best respond to those needs.

“America is a great super-power, and we need their hand,” said Samatar.

Through their collaboration, Samatar has been able to offer the chaplains here access to certain areas they would otherwise be unable to access, and from that Samatar has been able to submit requests for civil projects from the U.S. embassy.

“He has allowed my team to go into areas like the Gelala and Hariba districts, and from that they have made a request to the embassy to have new schools, wells and concerns from the embassy,” said Dinkins, “and that is all a result of our work with the minister and our cooperation.”

While the two men are of different faiths, Dinkins, a presbyterian, and Samatar, a muslim, their religious differences haven’t impeded or disturbed their teamwork or progress. ([more](#))

.....
Army Chaplain goes in search of Abraham

By Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude, 1st SB, PAO - Nov 21, 2007 - 8:10:53 PM

Ur, Iraq - In Genesis chapter 12, God said to Abram, "get yourself out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you" These words, spoken long ago, came alive for Chaplain Terrence Hayes, 1st Sustainment Brigade chaplain, as he traveled to the ancient city of Ur.

"About 4 thousand years ago the Profit Abraham lived in a house traditionally right behind us...Abraham, about seventy-five years old, heard Gods voice to move to a land where he would fulfill a great promise to him," said Hayes.

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As he made his way through the ancient ruins the guide Dhief Muhsen, an Iraqi citizen who lives next to the site with his wife and seven children spoke of the people who lived there many thousands of years ago. "They found the name Abramum. A name that had some root of Abraham in there," said Muhsen.

"If Abraham lived in a house like that there was twenty-seven rooms so he was quit a wealthy man. To leave that sort of lifestyle, a twenty-seven room mansion, to go to a land that I will show you. He had no idea where that land was quit an act of faith," said Hayes.

A few hundred meters down a narrow, dusty trail stands the Ziggurat. A terraced-pyramid temple of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians was built over 4,000 years ago. The temple has slanting walls with steps and rises some 50 feet above the surrounding desert; a site that was of great interest to the chaplain.

"I do a seminar called Walk through the Bible seminar and it traces all the major people places and events of the entire Bible and one of the scenes is the beginning of the call of Abraham is at Ur. God began to work with the people who worked with the people who would be the salt of the earth. And the seminar says Ur; Persian Gulf, Salt; Sarah, Abraham, Lot, Terrah, the 4 individuals who lived in this area," continued Hayes.

The Army has allowed Hayes to travel a bit and as a result has been able to visit historical sites like Ur. "This is the first Old Testament site I can think of visiting. When we were stationed in Germany we visited Ephesus and Miletus which are New Testament sites," said Hayes. ([more](#))



News You Can Use

The Military Chaplains Association (MCA)

Warrior-Care Resource Guide

The first MCA initiative involves a "master notebook" of resources for assistance to family members, pastors, and others in the civilian community who might be involved in helping our returning warriors. MCA is particularly concerned about those who have limited or no access to many of the briefings that are sponsored by DoD or VA.

The notebook will include several models of community workshops. Major topics are: 1) prevalent injuries in the Global War on Terror, 2) warning signs of Combat Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 3) spiritual crises that result from war, 4) care for those with psychological wounds, 5) steering through the referral maze for help from government agencies, and 6) spiritual support for healing.

There is wealth of valuable material on Warrior Care currently available. MCA is seeking to gather the best examples that address the most important topics with the least amount of technical language. Many chaplains have developed specialized materials on the care of military personnel and their families. Or, religious faith groups have prepared such items. MCA would deeply appreciate access to any of these materials.

Please contact the Executive Director, chaplains@mca-usa.org, with suggestions about informative materials or presentation models for possible inclusion in our notebook.

Note – The MCA National Institute will be held at Fort Jackson, SC, April 7-10. For more information see [MCA Ministry Dates 2008](#).



Military One Source

This innovative and thorough web page is a one stop resource for nearly any type of information one may need regarding military support issues. Through direct links on the page personnel may contact service providers to arrange appointments or special requests. Issues as diverse as career, deployment, and elder care are all addressed in just one click. Particularly helpful is the display of the date each article or entry was last updated so one knows exactly how timely the information is. Mr. Carr highly recommends use of this site for easily accessible and up to date information and as a starting point for nearly all inquiries regarding military questions.

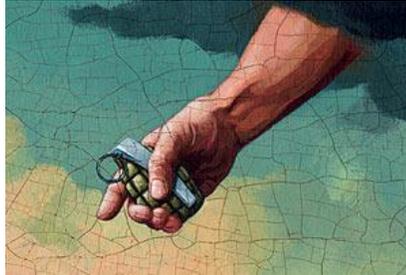


Economist Series on Religion and War

Faith will unsettle politics everywhere this century; it will do so least when it is separated from the state.

A RELIGIOUS fanatic feels persecuted, goes overseas to fight for his God and then returns home to attempt a bloody act of terrorism. Next week as Britons celebrate the capture of Guy Fawkes, a Catholic jihadist, under the Houses of Parliament in 1605, they might reflect how dismally modern the Gunpowder Plot and Europe's wars of religion now seem.

Back in the 20th intellectuals (and even some marginal to public life; faith was foreign policy. Symptomatically, Muslim holidays until the 1990s. is playing a central role. From Baghdad, people have been slain volunteers have poured into these great religions has a bloody not Catholics and Protestants). And once again zealotry seems all too relevant to foreign policy: America would surely not have invaded Iraq and Afghanistan (and be thinking so actively of striking Iran) had 19 young Muslims not attacked New York and Washington.



century, most Western politicians and clerics) assumed religion was becoming largely treated as an irrelevance in State Department diaries ignored In the 21st century, by contrast, religion Nigeria to Sri Lanka, from Chechnya to in God's name; and money and regions. Once again, one of the world's divide (this time it is Sunnis and Shias,

This series of 9 articles and related support information is available from the Economist's November 2007 edition. It provides an overview of areas around the globe in which religion and conflict are related to the point of bloodshed and disruption of life. Written from a secular point of view, it informs with history and perspective the relations between many of these conflicts at a level not often available from traditional news sources.

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The Free Exercise Clause and the Parameters of Religious Liberty

An excerpt from the Pew Forum Question and Answer Series on The Free Exercise Clause. This issue features one of our conference speakers, Robert W. Tuttle, David R. and Sherry Kirschner Berz Research Professor of Law and Religion, George Washington University Law School.

"The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that the federal government will respect the "free exercise" of religion. But the precise meaning of "free exercise" and exactly what constitutes an infringement of this right are not clear-cut. At the heart of the debate is one basic question: Do individuals or groups professing sincerely held religious beliefs have a right because of those beliefs to be exempt from legal requirements generally imposed on all citizens? The courts' answer has differed over time and depending on the circumstances.

The latest backgrounder in a series of occasional essays on the relationship between government and religion details the history of the free exercise debate and examines the significant Supreme Court and lower court cases that make up the jurisprudence in this area. As a supplement to this backgrounder, one of its authors, Robert W. Tuttle, spoke with the Pew Forum about how the current law on free exercise might be applied in certain, real-world circumstances."

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Religious Literacy: What Every American Should Know

An excerpt from the transcript of Pew Forum's biannual Faith Angle Conference on religion, politics and public life. [Stephen Prothero](#), chair of the [Department of Religion at Boston University](#), discussed the issue of religious illiteracy in the United States. His book, [Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know - And Doesn't](#) discusses some of the same issues addressed by David Kinnaman regarding the changing dynamic of religious literacy among the American population in general.

"And students do really badly. I think about one out of nine of my students would pass with 60 percent or better. And one thing that really intrigued me is, at the end, I would give them a list of Bible characters and then Bible stories and I'd ask them to match them. I'd have Adam and Eve and Paul and Moses on one side and, on the other side, I'd have Exodus and the Road to Damascus and the Garden of Eden. I'd ask them to draw a line between the two, and it's amazing - (laughter) - the lines that they would draw in their heads. Paul would be getting the olive branch from the dove and - (laughter) - Jesus would be parting the Red Sea. I mean, somebody must have been able to do that. It was probably Jesus, you know. (Laughter.)

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And again, these weren't obscure things. It wasn't even like David and Goliath things. And so now, when I read stories in magazines and newspapers--Appalachian State beats Michigan, or any other David and Goliath story - I always kind of laugh and think nobody knows that story. Most Americans probably don't know that reference to David and Goliath."



Chaplain assistant chiefs evaluate pre-deployment training

by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol - U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

11/21/2007 - **FORT DIX, N.J. (AFP)** -- Enlisted leaders in the Air Force's chaplain assistant career field made a special visit to the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center in early November to talk with chaplains and chaplain assistant students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course and to observe the course.

The visit brought together Chief Master Sgt. Chuck Johnson, the Air Force chaplain assistant career field manager, and command level functional chiefs including Chief Master Sgts. Russ Geyer from Air Mobility Command, Scott Turner from Air Education and Training Command, and Geoffrey Preudhomme from Air Combat Command.

"We came here with one of our goals being to evaluate the curriculum and figure out what skill sets they're provided (during ACST)," Chief Johnson said. "Additionally, I'm going to the deployed areas later this year and while there, I'm going to look and see if there are any gaps in our training that we need to fill. Essentially, this is all a part of that evaluation process."

The chaplain assistant career field is one of three career fields Air Force-wide that sends students to the center's ACST course -- the other two being public affairs and judge advocate career fields. During ACST, students receive specific pre-deployment training to include convoy operations, military operations in urban terrain, combat first and more.

"This is one of our two primary locations where we give our chaplains and chaplain assistants advance readiness training prior to a deployment," Chief Johnson said. "This is where they learn the skills they need to know to go and survive and operate in the deployed environment."[\(more\)](#)



Navy Professional Development Training Course - Combat Operational Stress Control for Caregivers: Understanding and Addressing Combat Stress

The goal of the PDTC is to equip participants with tools, techniques, and strategies that will enhance their ability to minister to MILPERS and their families in the area of combat stress. Specific take-aways include the ability to:

1. Analyze the complex issues of combat stress injury and determine the appropriate crisis intervention model to use in response.
2. Employ techniques of Psychological First Aid and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for dealing with Combat Stress.
3. Incorporate spiritual beliefs and practices as a coping strategy, and integrating them into ministry plans that target PTSD, family issues, care for care givers, self-care, and other deployment-cycle issues.

By all accounts, this should be one of the best and most relevant PDTCs ever for several reasons. First, the Schoolhouse has secured THE leading SMEs in the area, most notably Dr. Brett Litz, who has authored most of the definitive works in combat stress. Second, this PDTC is a joint partnership between the Chaplain Corps, BUMED, Marine Corps' Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) Office, Fleet and Family Service Centers and Marine Corps Family Team Building. Third, a great deal of care has been devoted to ensuring that spirituality is included as a key part of the intervention strategy. It's not a tack-on, but a serious attempt to leverage spirituality as a way to bring about healing to those who exhibits symptoms of combat stress. There's also a growing recognition that Chaplains and RPs can really be lead agents for COSC in ground combat units. Last, we are getting a lot of interest from sister service and foreign chaplaincies wanting to attend. We have a delegation of Brits and Romanians attending the Naples PDTC and have just offered 20 seats to Army and Air Force. We are offering the PDTC at 13 separate locations in CONUS/OCONUS, including Quantico. The schedule is:

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Sept 07	Newport (Validation conference)
7-10 Jan 08	Pensacola
14-17 Jan 08	Jacksonville
11-14 Feb 08	San Diego
25-28 Feb 08	Kitsap
4-7 Mar 08	Okinawa
10-13 Mar 08	Norfolk
31 Mar-3 Apr	Little Creek
14-17 Apr 08	Naples
5-8 May 08	Pearl Harbor
12-15 May 08	Camp Pendleton
19-22 May 08	Camp Lejeune
19-22 Aug 08	Quantico

Historical Note

Chaplains Struggle to Protect Monastery in Iraq

by [Eric Westervelt](#)

[Morning Edition](#), November 21, 2007 · In a patch of sloping hillside in southwest Mosul — next to a junkyard of destroyed Iraqi army tanks — sits Iraq's oldest Christian monastery.

Saint Elijah's, a fortress-like complex of buildings dating to the 6th century, was badly damaged during the U.S.- led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Now, a few U.S. military chaplains are struggling to protect the ancient Chaldean Catholic monastery from neglect, unexploded ordnance and looters.

History of the Monastery

At one time the freshwater creek and surrounding hills, prime grazing land, made this valley a sweet spot for early Christian monks to build a place to live and worship. But today, rusting Russian-made Iraqi tanks and bombed-out car shells are piled in a junk heap next to the monastery.

First Cavalry Division Pvt. 1st Class Nathaniel Irvine walks carefully around shards of old pottery. Chunks of old plates and clay jug handles litter the monastery's ground along with shrapnel from tank and mortar rounds. U.S. soldiers have removed more than 130 pieces of unexploded ordnance from the site, but there could be more.

It's believed Dair Mar Elia, or Saint Elijah's monastery, was built in the late 6th century by early Chaldean/Assyrian Catholic monks. Armies under Persian ruler Tahmaz Nadir Shah attacked and looted the place in the 17th century, slaughtering the three dozen monks who lived here.



By Chaldean/Assyrian tradition, monks' bones were often buried in the monastery walls. And on this windy hillside, Irvine says, soldiers have found what they believe are human remains sticking out of the crumbling walls.

"Look inside down there; there's a bone they've found down there, so it's believed they're probably buried in these two tunnels," he says.

Destruction of Today

Today the outer wall of the monastery's chapel looks as though it were swatted by the hand of a giant. But it was no giant: It was a U.S. anti-tank missile fired in 2003 by advancing 101st Airborne soldiers battling an Iraqi tank unit based in and around the site.

"(The 101st) fired upon the tanks using stuff that would destroy the tanks. They were being fired at so they had to return fire," Irvine says. ([more](#))



Recruiting News

[Military copes with shortage of chaplains](#)

By [Andrea Stone](#), USA TODAY

Army Maj. Paul Hurley journeyed four days by convoy, aircraft and helicopter to reach the remote outpost in Iraq near the Syrian border where 50 U.S. soldiers hunkered down in November 2006. He was the first Roman Catholic priest to visit in six months.

"It was a very profound experience (to) visit soldiers who are facing their mortality every day," Hurley recalls. He celebrated Mass and heard confession from a dozen Catholic soldiers before leading Thanksgiving prayers for the base.

Hurley belongs to a dwindling flock of chaplains whose mission to support soldiers and their families has been strained by the demands of war and a shortage in their ranks. The Navy and Air Force usually recruit enough religious leaders, but the Army, which expects chaplains to be able to do everything soldiers do except carry a weapon and now relies heavily on reserve units, is hurting for spiritual aid.

Chaplains are trained to help servicemembers of all religious faiths — or none. Among denominations, though, Roman Catholic chaplains are the most scarce, a reflection of a nationwide priest shortage. There are no imams to minister to a growing number of Muslims in the Army Guard and Reserve. The California and New York National Guard, which have a larger proportion of Jewish soldiers than other states, could use more rabbis, says Army Guard Maj. Timothy Baer, who recruits chaplains.

Lt. Col. Ran Dolinger of the Army Chief of Chaplains Office says every battalion that deploys to Iraq or Afghanistan has a chaplain. To fill those slots, more than 75 chaplains have been "volun-told" to report for multiple deployments, he says.

The Army also has turned for chaplains to the Reserve and National Guard, which have the biggest shortfalls of spiritual personnel. Dolinger says the Army Reserves are short more than 100 chaplains of an authorized 516. The Guard needs nearly 250 more chaplains to fill its 722 slots.

"You cannot measure what the chaplain does," says Army Maj. Insoon Hoagland, a Christian Reform chaplain who recently returned to Fort Hood in Texas from a second tour in Iraq.

"I witnessed so many traumas," she says. As the only chaplain at an aid station in Diyala province, Hoagland comforted wounded and dying soldiers and the staff members who treated them.

Back home, "It's very busy. There's no down time," says Army Reserve Col. Jerry Stone. He says he was called to active duty from his Maryland church two years ago to "back fill" for chaplains who had been deployed from Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The Methodist chaplain counsels families of deployed soldiers, visits the wounded, leads services and serves as a casualty notification officer. He has helped deliver the worst news to four families.

The war and its long deployments have made all reserve recruiting difficult, but clergy are even tougher to sign up. Unlike other citizen soldiers, chaplains have little job security at home. Federal law that requires civilian employers to hold reservists' jobs for them until they return doesn't apply to chaplains because of the Constitution's First Amendment separation of church and state.

For ministers with small congregations, there is also the challenge of training on weekends when they are expected to be in the pulpit.

"A lot of churches are very (reluctant) to hire" reservists, says Army Col. David White, state chaplain for the Tennessee National Guard, which has just 10 chaplains for 22 slots. "They don't want to have to replace" the chaplains if they are called to active duty.

The bar to become a chaplain is high. A chaplain must have a graduate degree in theology, at least two years of professional experience, be endorsed as qualified by their denomination and pass a physical exam. By the time they have completed all that training and are commissioned, many are 10 years older than officers of the same rank, White says. And they are expected to endure the same physical rigors and danger. No chaplains have been killed in Iraq, but several have been wounded and six have earned combat medals for valor. ([more](#))



Chaplain David White, left, talks with Sgt. Jose Navarro at Walter Reed hospital on Saturday. Navarro was hurt in Afghanistan.

By William B. Plowman for USA TODAY

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Army Recruiting

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“Providing Spiritual Strength to the Army Strong”



Air Force Chaplain Recruiting

1-800.803.2452



Navy Chaplain Recruiting

CAPT Diana Meehan, CHC, USN – diana.l.meehan2@navy.mil or (901) 874-9216

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- [Military One Source](#)
- [Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD –](#)
- [The Military Chaplain’s Association](#)
- [The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#)
- [Religious News Service](#)
- [Coalition of Spirit Filled Churches Member Groups](#)
- [Christian Reformed Church Resources for Soldiers](#)
- [J.M. Dawson Institute of Church State Studies – Baylor University](#)
- [Religion Clause](#)
- [U.S. Department of Defense – Defense Link](#)
- [Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty](#)
- [The American Legion](#)

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Executive Director's Note

Letter from NCMAF/ECVAC Executive Director Jack Williamson

If we don't change our direction we're likely to end up where we're headed. Since Herm opened his letter with a German quotation, I open mine with an appropriate Chinese truism. I believe this relates to an alarming direction I see for NCMAF and ECVAC at the present time.

Circumstances have changed in our military services and along with these changes; there are major impacts on our operations. At one time NCMAF received the majority of its operating funds from special (designated) offerings taken up at military chapel services. This worked well as congregations served by chaplains were able to partially fund NCMAF, the organization that helps ensure military ministry is provided for all personnel.

Today this source of our income has been drastically reduced. One reason is that military chapels are no longer as well attended as they once were. A great deal of military housing is being built in the community, families are seeking fellowship in local congregations, and the number of military bases has been reduced as we feel the impact of several BRACs on our military infrastructure. With the drawdown in forces after the fall of the Iron Curtain in the 90s, overseas bases were reduced and chapels were closed and consolidated. The plain truth is there are not as many people attending chapels anymore.

A second reason, those who do attend chapel have changed outlooks. For a wide variety of reasons, the ability to collect designated offerings has been drastically curtailed. This makes it hard for communities of faith to take up an offering for NCMAF and it also makes it very difficult for the various Chief's of Chaplains to propose such an offering. I do not believe this is indicative of any change in recognition of the importance of NCMAF, simply that funding is more problematic than before.

A final reason is technology. Many people no longer carry cash. Navy ships have gone cashless and there are churches in our communities that collect their offering via debit and credit cards. Young men and women all have cards they use everywhere, including McDonalds. Our chapel services are often not equipped to accept offerings in this way and thus have fewer funds available to distribute to organizations such as ours.

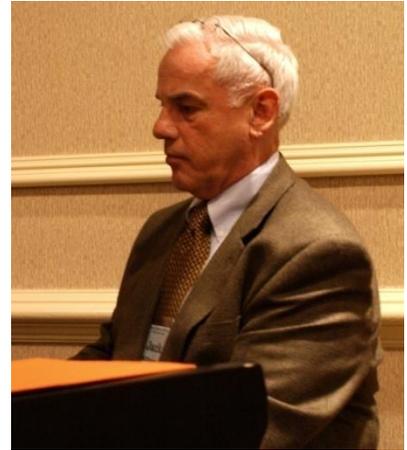
The result - if we don't change our direction, we will end up where we are going – broke. Our revenues have fallen significantly in the last few years and we have cut expenses where we can. And yet our work is vital. The support we have engendered within DoD for chaplaincy is tremendous as evidenced by Dr. Chu requesting to personally address our gathering last year and permitting Mr. Carr to do the same this year. Our chaplains, active, Guard, and Reserve, have never faced greater pressures than they do today. NCMAF is an organization needed now more than ever.

Please consider how you might change the direction of our financial situation for the better. Encourage your chapel or faith community to make a donation; send your contribution directly to us; or contribute to NCMAF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

We promise to use your contributions to support ministry to our nation's sons and daughters serving in harm's way.

Collegially,

Jack Williamson
NCMAF/ECVAC Executive Director



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Springfield, VA 22153

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