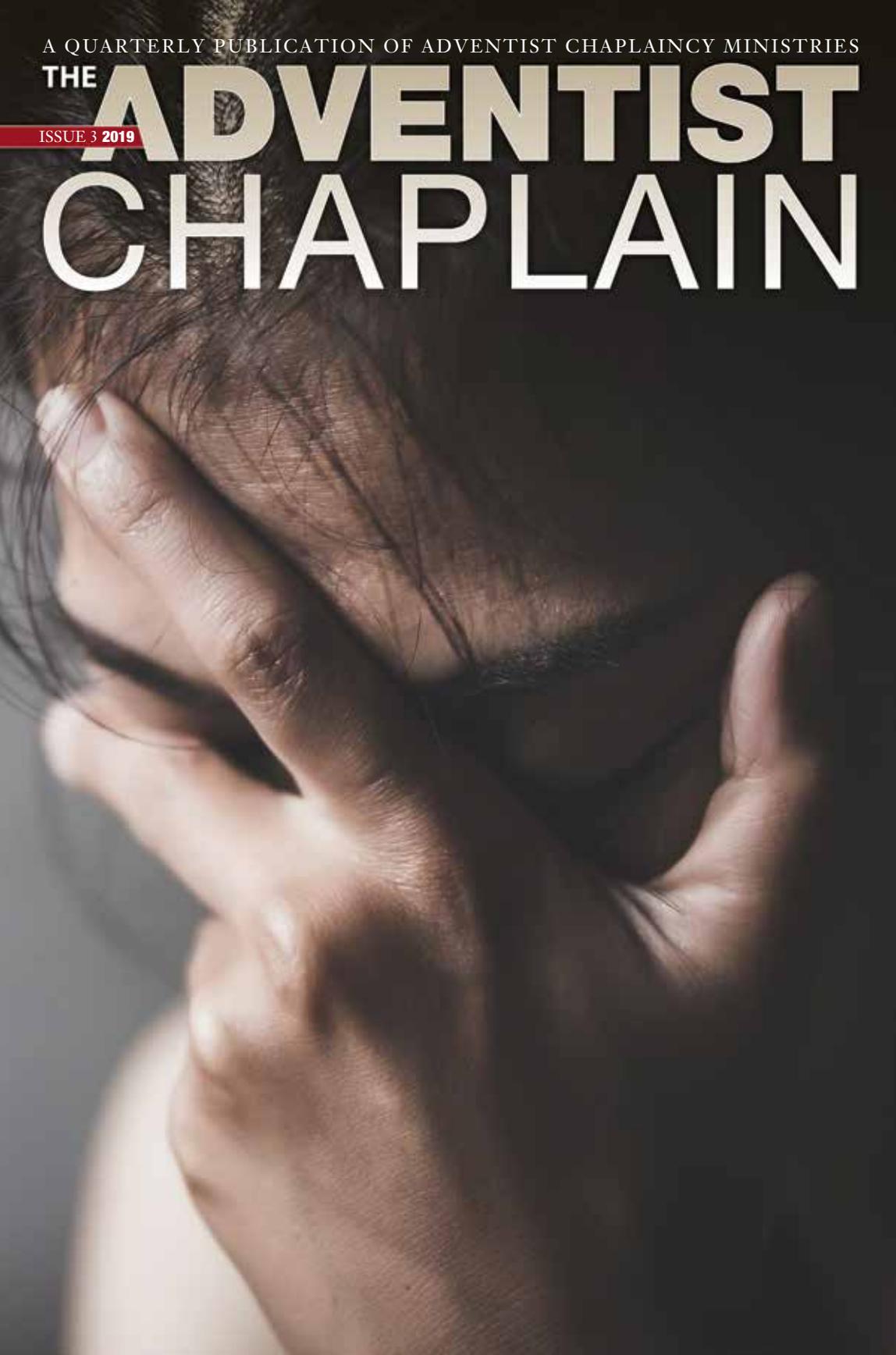


A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ADVENTIST CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES

THE

ADVENTIST CHAPLAIN

ISSUE 3 2019





IT'S PERPLEXING

PERSPECTIVE

By Mario E. Ceballos, D.Min, BCC
Director/Endorser, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries – General Conference

Suicide comes in different ways. Not all suicides are created equal. That is why it is a very perplexing matter and not easily explained. Not all suicides are the result of mental illness. People end their lives for many reasons, but some are not considered legal and or approved universally.¹

At different times, there have been countries which legislated a legal suicide. This is commonly called “assisted suicide” and or “physician-assisted suicide.” Generally, there are certain criteria that must be met, which varies according to the country where this has been legalized.

Most people who think about dying by suicide and or do die by suicide suffer from great emotional pain, despair, hopelessness, and/or helplessness. In English literature, the legendary Shakespearean play “Romeo and Juliet” portrays death by suicide. When the lovers are not able to publicly live out their love for each other, they end their lives. Even though the story is fictional, it reflects

suicidal ideations of real-life people.

As a chaplain, one day, I was visiting a patient suffering from a terminal disease. She looked at me and said. *“We are more merciful to animals than to humans. When a horse breaks a leg, we put it out of its misery by shooting it. I am in pain. I have only a few weeks to live, but the doctors keep on testing me to see how rapidly my disease is advancing. Why they don’t have mercy on me and help me die soon?”*

I am not advocating or making a case for assisted suicide, but that scenario played out many times over makes you think about the ravages of sin on the human body. This can cause a person to wish for death.

King Saul, the first king of Israel, chose to die by suicide. He saw the battle was lost and faced being taken captive. He knew the prospect of unspeakable horror, pain, and suffering that would be his lot as a captive of the enemy. According to the biblical record, he took his own life.

“Then said Saul to his armorbearer, draw thy sword, and thrust me through

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therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore, Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him.”²

Suicide is a very complicated issue.³ In many cultures it is considered an honorable death. In those cultures, as in the case of King Saul, death by suicide is often found in the military culture.

Following World War II, we heard stories of commanders, mainly from Asian cultures, who faced disgrace, defeat, and embarrassment. Like King Saul, they “fell on their swords” or shot themselves. Several years ago, a United States Navy Admiral faced public embarrassment due to the inappropriate use of military citations, and took his life.

Suicide can be the result of mental illness. Regardless of the form of suicide, physician-assisted suicide (PAS) or physician administered suicide (PAE) or suicide in any form, the action is serious and not something to be taken lightly.

We can’t speak about suicide without reviewing what many of us call the

sanctity of life. Sanctity of life is defined as “the belief that, because people are made in God’s image,⁴ human life has an inherently sacred attribute that should be protected and respected at all times. While God gave humanity the authority to kill and eat other forms of life,⁵ the murdering of other human beings is expressly forbidden, with the penalty being death.”^{6,7}

As God-fearing people with the belief that we are created by God and the understanding that we are temples of the Holy Spirit⁸ suicide is problematic.

I am not attempting to answer all the questions and or dilemmas that suicides present to us. In the pages of this magazine others will speak on this very important issue that will be with us a long as we live on this earth where sin and death abounds.

¹ <https://www.intechopen.com/books/bioethics-medical-ethical-and-legal-perspectives/-assisted-dying-a-view-of-the-legal-social-ethical-and-clinical-perspectives>

² 1 Samuel 31: 4-6, ASV

³ <https://projectsemicolon.com/what-is-suicide/>

⁴ Genesis 1:26-27, ESV

⁵ Genesis 9:3, ESV

⁶ Genesis 9:6, ESV

⁷ <https://www.gotquestions.org/sanctity-of-life.html>

⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:19, ESV

WHAT'S



Please share what is happening with chaplaincy in your part of the world.

- Send it to ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org
- Copy your Union and Division ACM Directors.
- Include your email and phone number.

A DEATH LIKE NO OTHER

**BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE, HOPE, AND
COMFORT IN THE FACE OF SUICIDE**

By Chaplain O. Kris Widmer, M.Div., Palliative Care Chaplain



For those who contemplate it, those who fail at
it, those who succeed at it;
And the families and friends who mourn them;
And those who minister to them all.

Chaplain O. Kris Widmer

INTRODUCTION

Many ecclesiastical theologies regarding suicide conclude that there is no salvation available to one who dies by suicide. The common conclusion is that those who kill themselves are beyond the saving grace of God and will be among the lost in the final judgment. It is deemed necessary, when one also teaches an immediate continuation of existence in heaven at death. Why wouldn't one kill themselves and go to glory. Thus, the fear of the final fire gives a strong incentive to live on here. However, such a theology offers little hope for mourners and those who comfort them.

Suicide is certainly “a death like no other.” No one questions the salvation of believers who die by other means: accident, illness, age, murder, disasters, or predators. However, what about a death that is self-caused? This article is my attempt to say, “Wait. Not so fast! Maybe we should reconsider our theology.”

SUICIDE ON THE RISE

Suicide rates are increasing in all segments of the world's population. It is said that the United States military experiences as many as twenty-two suicide deaths each day, among both active duty and retired personnel. Worldwide, there are 850,000 successful suicides every year – that is 2,329 each day.

It is not a matter of “if,” but “when,” you will be called to minister in this context. Few things will stretch a minister's soul and theology more than finding comforting words to say to a grieving family and community when one has died by suicide.

WORDS MATTER

Read those last three words again – “died by suicide.” The usual phrase is, “committed suicide.” This came from the era when suicide was a crime, much like committing larceny or adultery. “Committed” conveys shame and stigma even to this day. I now use the more neutral phrase – “died by suicide.”

THE BIBLE ROGUE'S GALLERY

The idea that suicide is tantamount to an unpardonable sin comes through the ancient church theologians of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, along with Dante's *Inferno*. Suicide was considered self-murder, breaking the sixth commandment. Since the victim couldn't go to confession there is no salvation for them.

This view is supported biblically by referencing King Saul,¹ the Apostle Judas,² as well as the lesser known Ahithophel,³ and Israel's King Zimri.⁴

However, we should refrain from passing judgment on the eternal destinies of Bible characters, given our limited knowledge from the accounts. Who are we to judge? All four of these souls could be said to be “lost” based on the *trending habits of their lives*, not the means of their deaths.

King Saul had drifted away from

God, as evidenced by his numerous disobediences of Samuel's instructions. Even the prophet withdrew and never saw Saul's face again.⁵ Saul's Endor séance would justify such condemnation, regardless of the way he died. Judas' embezzlement, his marginal discipleship, and his betrayal kiss determine his destiny, rather than his mode of death.

THE BIBLE'S REDEEMED GALLERY

There are other Bible biographies to ponder besides Saul and Judas. Let's consider those who we have good reason to believe will be raised in the resurrection of the righteous.

SAMSON

Consider a name from Hebrews 11:32 - Samson. What! The Israelite judge who was a triple womanizer and who used his divine strength as a toy! The “suicide pusher” of temple pillars, whose intentional act resulted in his own death, along with 3,000 enemies.⁶ Why does he get to be listed among the faithful? Well, “the hair of his head began to grow,”⁷ evidence that he and God had important conversations as he pushed that millstone. So, perhaps a person can die by suicide and also be right with God.

We should refrain from passing judgment on the eternal destinies of Bible characters, given our limited knowledge from the accounts.

THE ARMOR BEARER

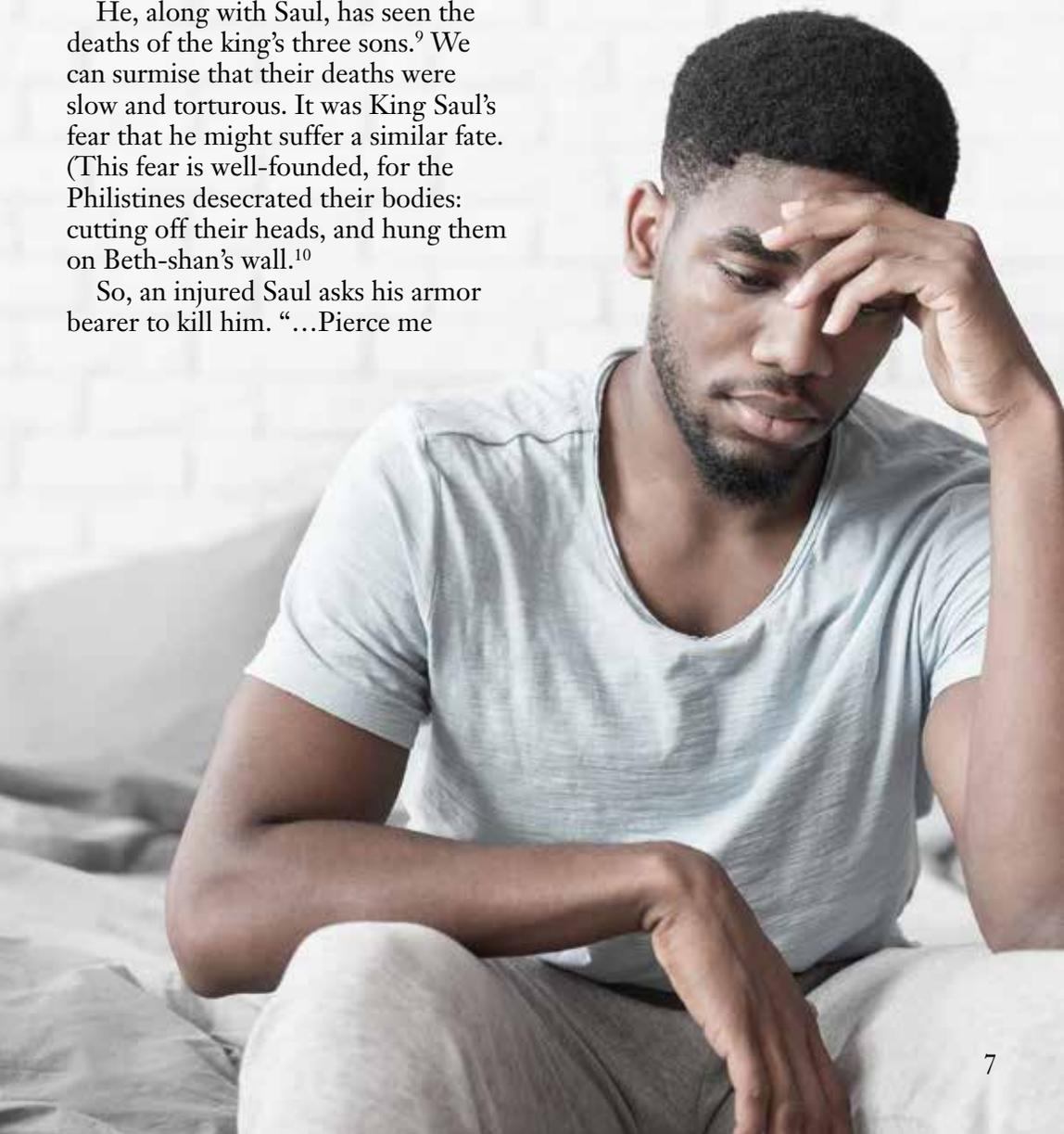
In our haste to convict King Saul, we have often missed the quivering form of a frightened armor bearer. “And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him.”⁸

I have taken to calling him – PFC Jacob Jacobson (That is *Private First Class*, for those of us without a military lexicon.) He has been conscripted to drag Saul’s equipment around. He has a uniform and a sword.

He, along with Saul, has seen the deaths of the king’s three sons.⁹ We can surmise that their deaths were slow and torturous. It was King Saul’s fear that he might suffer a similar fate. (This fear is well-founded, for the Philistines desecrated their bodies: cutting off their heads, and hung them on Beth-shan’s wall.¹⁰

So, an injured Saul asks his armor bearer to kill him. “...Pierce me

through...lest these uncircumcised come...and make sport of me.”¹¹ But PFC Jacobson refuses this order “being greatly afraid.” I can picture him offering a shaky salute. “*W-w-with...due re-re-respect, Your M-m-majesty, I will n-n-not lift m-m-my hand against the L-L-Lord’s anointed.*” He answers “No.” And so King Saul falls on his own sword, a suicide that has influenced theology for the past three thousand years.



Keep living! You are loved! Stay with us, please. We'll assist you getting the help you need.

Now PFC Jacobson looks around. The King and his sons are dead. The battle is lost. Rather than face a torturous death, this military hero also dies by suicide! I am unwilling to teach that this soldier should be considered lost due to his desperate, final act.

JESUS

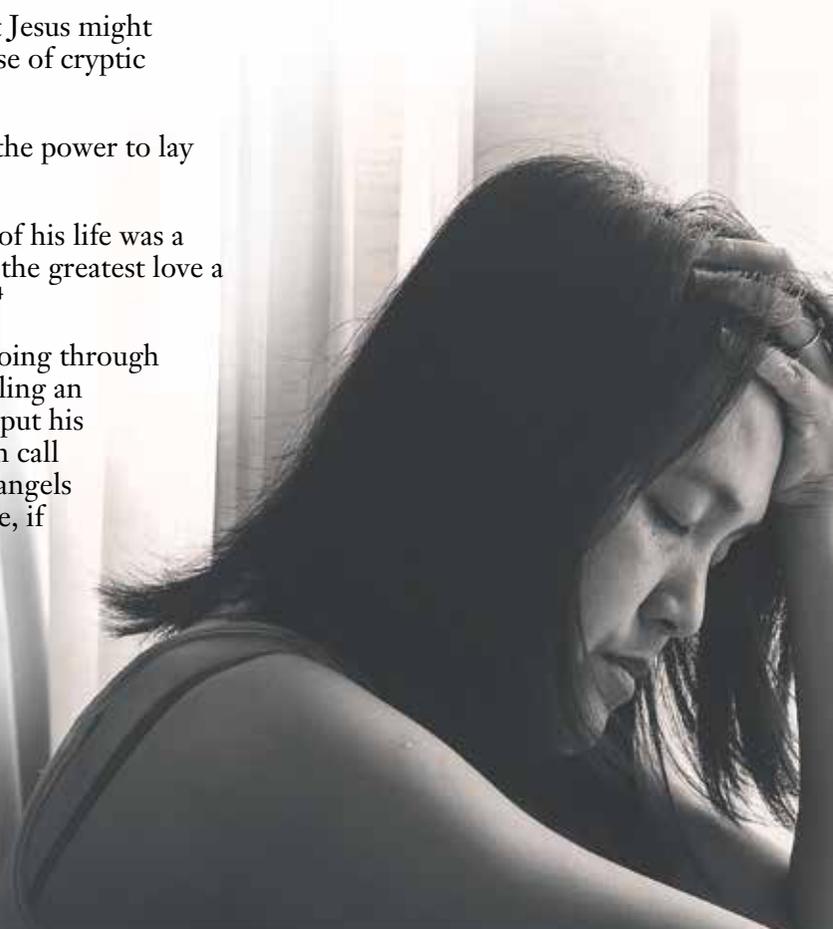
And it could be said that Jesus also died by suicide. I will keep my reasoning brief but clear.

- The Jews thought Jesus might kill himself because of cryptic statements.¹²
- Jesus said he had the power to lay his life down.¹³
- The laying down of his life was a demonstration of the greatest love a person can have.¹⁴
- Jesus insisted in going through with the cross, telling an armed disciple to put his sword away. "I can call twelve legions of angels to come rescue me, if I so desire."¹⁵

- Jesus died by his own choice and actions...so that we might have abundant life.¹⁶

TO THE SUICIDAL I SAY:

If you believe that suicide is not pardonable by God (based on Saul and Judas), and **this** is what prevents you from ending your life ... **keep believing this!** Keep living! You are loved! Stay with us, please. We'll assist you getting the help you need.



TO THE GRIEVING SURVIVORS I SAY:

I am so sorry about the death of your loved one. Tell me about what they meant to you? (Listening opportunity.) Then, consider the Bible stories mentioned above: Samson, the Armor Bearer, and Jesus. Your loved one is safe with God.

Next, ponder Romans 8:35-39: **Nothing** can separate us from the love of God. Nothing means **nothing!** Trust your loved one to the God who understands and is merciful. In the resurrection, Jesus will put arms of love around them as He smiles and asks, “What were you thinking?”

TRENDING NOW

I also find great comfort in this quotation from the inspired prophet in my church tradition: Mrs. Ellen G. White.

“It is the trend of the life, the direction in which one is going that we must measure the fruit of a prophet’s life (*or anyone’s life*). All good people occasionally do bad things, and all bad

people occasionally do good things. Every life has a trend – a very sobering thought, once you come to think about it. My life has a trend. So does yours. What is the nature of that trend? It is this *trend of the life* that the test of “fruits” seeks to measure.”¹⁷

Suicide can be seen as a good person doing the occasional bad thing, one that is undoable. We must trust them, as we trust all the rest of our beloved dead, to the grace, mercy, and power of our loving God.

Chaplain O. Kris Widmer is a Seventh-day Adventist minister and currently works as a Palliative Care chaplain in an undisclosed location. His enjoyment of life is augmented through devotional journaling, family togetherness, artistic explorations, poetry writing, and occasionally eating ice cream; among many other simple pleasures.

¹ Samuel 31:4

² Matthew 27:3-5

³ 2 Samuel 17:23

⁴ 1 Kings 16:15-20

⁵ 1 Samuel 15:35

⁶ Judges 16:27

⁷ Judges 16:22

⁸ 1 Samuel 31:5, NASB

⁹ 1 Samuel 31:2

¹⁰ 1 Samuel 31:8-10

¹¹ 1 Samuel 31:4

¹² John 8:21, 22

¹³ John 10:17, 18

¹⁴ John 15:13, 14

¹⁵ Matthew 26:52-54

¹⁶ John 10:10

¹⁷ White, Ellen G. *Heralds of New Light*, page 17.

A SAFETY NET FOR SUICIDE

William J. Cork, M.Div.

Assistant Director

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—North American Division

One of my toughest years as a chaplain in the National Guard was 2017. There were five suicides in my brigade in one month, three of them in one battalion. I had returned to service in the Guard in 2009 after a lengthy break in service. I was quickly surprised by the numbers of suicides and incidents of suicidal ideation I was responding to—so different from my first ten years of service in the 1980s and 1990s. Each year since 2009 underscored the point—this is now what military chaplaincy looks like.

I don't recall any training in suicide intervention when I was an undergraduate theology major at Atlantic Union College. I recall only one lecture on the subject when I was in seminary, and it was touched upon briefly in the Army's Chaplain Officer Basic Course (I know because I still have the manual).

Chaplains today need to be well trained in practical suicide intervention techniques, and each military branch has responded to the challenge. The resources that the military uses include many that are available to the civilian population, and I encourage chaplains in other

disciplines as well as congregational pastors to take advantage of them.

Like many other military chaplains, I am a trainer in two evidence-based programs produced by LivingWorks in Calgary, Alberta, the leader in suicide intervention training for over thirty years.¹ Their programs are used not only by the military, but by community mental health agencies worldwide. ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day workshop in which participants learn to recognize possible signs of suicidal thoughts and practice fundamental skills that can help individuals develop a plan to stay safe. Another LivingWorks program, safeTALK, is a four-hour workshop that teaches how to recognize suicide signs, ask about suicide, and make a connection to a resource with intervention skills.

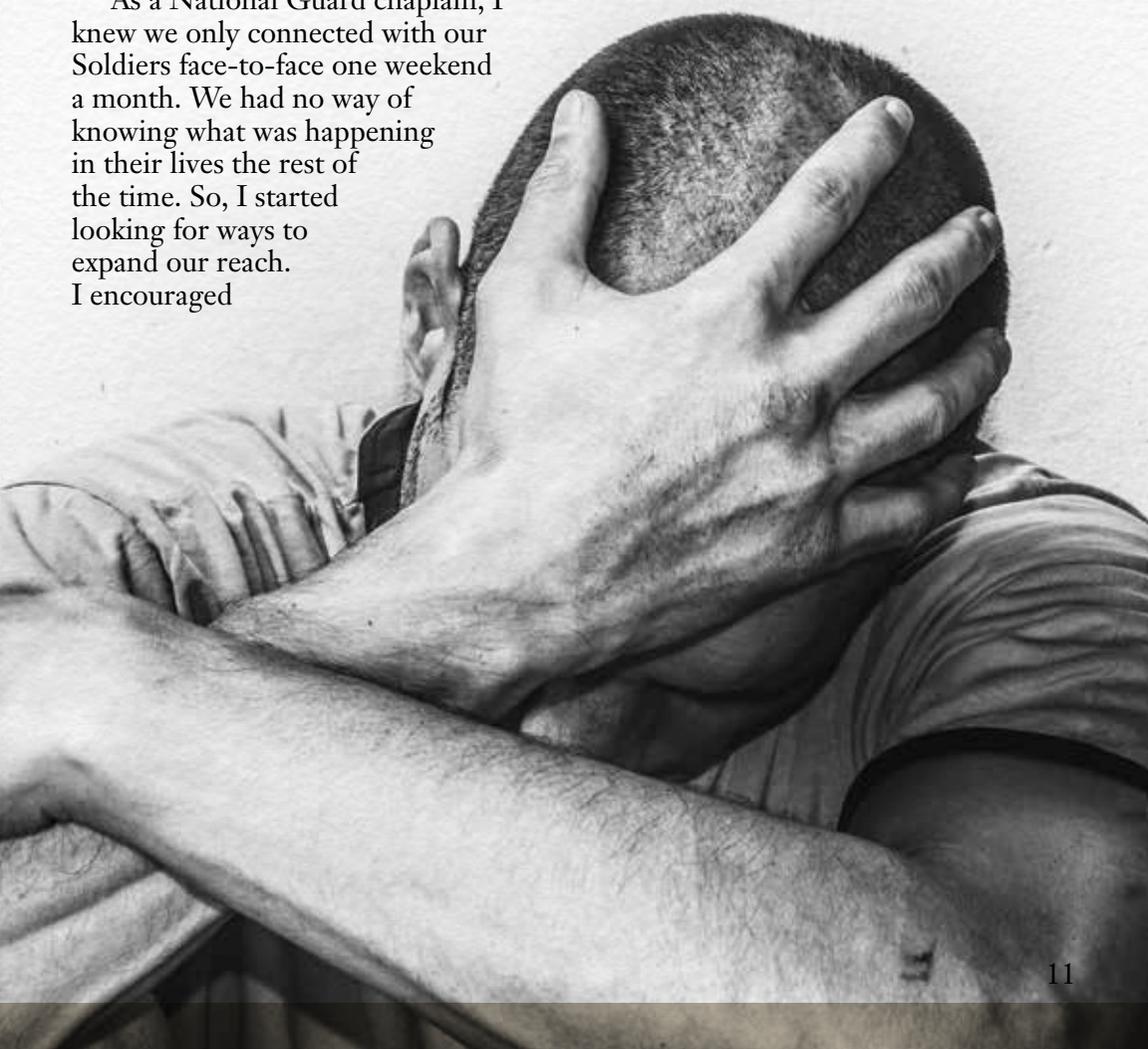


Chaplains who are trained in these programs (and others, like Mental Health First Aid) can offer themselves as resources to local churches, hospitals, and conferences. I have done trainings for pastors, other chaplains, as well as Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders.

The U.S. Veterans Administration estimates that twenty veterans die by suicide each day.² The best way for us to respond is to help create networks of safety in our communities, and to increase the number of points at which veterans and service members connect with individuals and agencies trained in mental health and suicide awareness.

As a National Guard chaplain, I knew we only connected with our Soldiers face-to-face one weekend a month. We had no way of knowing what was happening in their lives the rest of the time. So, I started looking for ways to expand our reach. I encouraged

The best way for us to respond is to help create networks of safety in our communities, and to increase the number of points at which veterans and service members connect with individuals and agencies trained in mental health and suicide awareness.





noncommissioned officers to make contact with their Soldiers between drills. Noticing that most of the suicide interventions I was doing came after another Soldier saw a friend say something on Facebook or Twitter, I encouraged leaders to follow their Soldiers on social media. I learned that the VA hospital in my community had an annual Mental Health Summit, bringing together community leaders to learn about issues veterans face and to share resources and make connections (I was then invited to be part of the planning committee). I asked our community mental health agency if I could help them teaching ASIST, and they were glad for the help.

The VA uses the Community Clergy Training Program³ to reach out to local clergy, especially in areas without a VA hospital or clinic, to teach them about the issues faced by veterans and service members, and to inform about VA resources. When the National Guard Bureau sent out an announcement that the VA wanted to partner with Army Reserve and National Guard chaplains, I volunteered. After a week of training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, I connected with Sherlock Brown, an Adventist chaplain serving at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, and we began to take the program to groups throughout east and southeast Texas.

Central Texas Medical Center in San Marcos, Texas, part of the AdventHealth system, hosted a Community Clergy Training for the area clergy association at the end of August, 2019. I contacted the Spiritual Care Director, Nahum Melendez (who also serves as a chaplain in the Navy Reserve), and he was happy to work with us.

Each of our communities can do more to build these kinds of connections between veteran service organizations and community resources. Chaplains, pastors, churches, and hospitals can all play a role. A good model in Houston is Combined Arms,⁴ which works with over fifty community organizations. Thirteen have a physical presence at the Combined Arms Center in the EADO (East of Downtown) neighborhood of Houston.

Transitioning veterans can come by, have a needs assessment, enjoy a cup of coffee, work out in the gym, and be connected with organizations that can meet their own needs, or that can be avenues of service by which they can give back to the community.

Combined Arms and the VA also collaborate as part of the Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families, which also includes local Police and Fire departments, Mental Health America, the county mental health agency, the United Way, and other organizations. Together they are seeking ways to standardize protocols, identify gaps, and build partnerships to increase the safety of our local veterans community, which is one of the largest. I helped to identify faith-based organizations and networks, to make sure they are part of the discussion.

For many Christians and churches – even for some pastors – mental health issues and suicide carry a sense of stigma. The Seventh-day Adventist health message, with its wholistic approach, is well suited to breaking-down stigma. We need to teach and preach, both in our own churches, and in the community. Adventists are respected in the health care community. I was invited by our

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county Public Health Department to be part of a strategic planning process. I heard time and again praise of Adventist community health clinics, and county officials begged me to spread the word that churches who are planning these should let them know, so they can support.

These are a few examples of how I have worked within my own community to help address the problem of suicide as a public health issue that requires a coordinated response. I saw it was necessary to provide support for the Soldiers of my National Guard unit. What if each chaplain did the same? Regardless of your setting, you are a part of your community and have a voice. You also have special skills that can benefit the church and the community. Working together, we can build networks of compassion and care that will enable us to hear cries of hurt, and provide hope.

¹ <https://www.livingworks.net>

² <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4074>

³ <https://www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/clergytraining/>

⁴ <https://combinedarms.us>



IT'S ABOUT MY SOLDIERS

By CH (LTC) Jorge Torres, U. S. Army with Deena Bartel-Wagner, editor



During his first three years as a Chaplain, Jorge Torres was deployed for twenty-seven months.

On a hot Sabbath afternoon, the Tampico church elder asked Jorge, “What are you going to study in college?”

“I believe God is calling me into pastoral ministry,” Jorge replied. “I couldn’t sleep last night because I felt that God was asking me to tell you that you need to become a minister. I came to find out if you were going to study something else,” said the elder. “If you were, I was going to convince you to study for the ministry.” When those words were uttered, Jorge Torres knew God had directed the elder in his mission.



“I grew up in an Adventist home,” says Jorge. “My parents joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church when I was three years old.” His personal belief system solidified as Jorge transitioned from child to teen. “I didn’t begin to grasp the importance of salvation by faith through the grace of Jesus until I was in my teens.”

With that understanding, Jorge began to sense something else. “The desire to share this with others filled me,” says Jorge. “Around me, I saw people discouraged in their Christian walk. I wanted to share the truth that changed my life.”

At 15, Jorge began to earnestly seek God’s will for his future. “I prayed for God to lead me. It was a couple of months before I encountered a response and then it wasn’t what I wanted to hear,” says Jorge. “One of the women at church, who I respected, approached me and said she wanted

Jorge Torres is passionate about ministry to his soldiers and leading his family in their friendship with Jesus.

to speak to me. She told me that she’d had a dream in which she saw me leading young people to Christ.”

Jorge continued to pray, and then the next week, a second member relayed a similar message about a dream that involved Jorge in ministry. “I was still skeptical but began to pay closer attention to God’s promptings.”

TIME TO DECIDE

Two years later, Jorge decided to follow the example of Gideon and lay a fleece before God. “I was in my senior year at Forest Lake Academy,” says Jorge. “Before leaving for a mission trip to Mexico, I asked God to give me confirmation about what I should do with my life. I didn’t think about it again until the Sabbath afternoon when the Tampico church elder asked me what I was going to study. This conversation was the conclusive confirmation that God called me into His ministry. From that day on, I have never questioned it.”

During his parish ministry, Jorge served churches in Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, and as a missionary in Mexico and Taiwan.

Growing up in a military family exposed Jorge to the lifestyle. “My brother served for 23 years and reached the rank of Master Sergeant,” says Jorge. “At the seminary, two recruiting chaplains spoke to me about military chaplaincy. It seemed like a natural fit, and I was commissioned as a Chaplain Candidate in the U. S. Army Reserve on May 8, 2001.”

Following seminary graduation, Jorge pastored for two and a half years in the Florida Conference. “I submitted my paperwork for active



When Jorge questioned if he was following God's leading, God provided an answer in a subtle, but powerful way.

duty and accessioned to active duty as a Chaplain on September 17, 2004. I cut my teeth as a Chaplain in war," says Jorge. "During my initial tour, I served with the 1-17th Calvary Regiment (AIR), Fort Bragg, North Carolina. We deployed in November 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III for a one year tour."

IS THIS WHERE YOU WANT ME?

Four months into his tour, Jorge began to wonder if he had misunderstood what God wanted from him. "I was feeling very homesick," recalls Jorge. The sand, the heat, the war were all taking a toll. "As I walked around the base, I asked God, 'Is this really where you want me? I could be back in Miami pastoring a church.'"

As Jorge walked into a protected area, he saw a soldier who was crying. The startled soldier was embarrassed and apologized. "I'm not religious, but I've very spiritual," she told Jorge. "I've been praying for someone to guide me." As the soldier pulled out her dog tags, Jorge noticed a ring on the chain that was a replica of one he had. "At that moment I breathed the prayer, 'God, I know you have me here for a reason.'"

When that deployment came to an end, Jorge was selected by the Division Chaplain's Office to be Rear-Detachment BDE Chaplain for the 1st Brigade Combat Team 504th (Airborne). "This assignment was almost of unheard of at this point in a chaplain's career," says Jorge. "I was a chaplain with only one year of experience!" Again, Jorge asked God to direct and show him why he'd been placed where he was at.

TWENTY-SEVEN MONTHS DEPLOYED

Jorge barely had time to catch his breath following a successful re-integration process from his combat tour. By June 2006, he was assigned to the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Airborne) Battalion, and redeployed for a fifteen-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom V-VI. During his first three years as a military chaplain, Jorge deployed for a total of 27 months.

Jorge's subsequent assignments have included postings in Ansbach, Germany as the Pastoral Coordinator for the Ansbach Garrison Chaplain's Office and advisor to the Seventh-day Adventist Chapels all across USAREUR (U.S. Army Europe); Fort Benning, Georgia with the 1-19th Infantry Battalion; the 120th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) in Fort Jackson, South Carolina; and Fort Bragg, North Carolina as the Brigade Chaplain for the 95th Civil Affairs Special Operations Brigade, the Brigade Chaplain for the 95th Civil Affairs Special Operations Brigade and Plans and Operations Chaplain for United States Special Operations Command in Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and in Fort Jackson, South



Jorge believes that being FAT—faithful, available, and teachable— is a vital part of his ministry as a Chaplain.

Carolina, home of the United States Army Chaplain Center and School, as a facilitator and instructor.

IT'S ABOUT MY SOLDIERS

As a chaplain, Jorge practices the FAT principle – being faithful, available, and teachable. “God has provided so many divine appointments through my ministry as a chaplain. As a band of brothers, we literally become each other’s families,” says Jorge. “During one of my deployments, I met a soldier who several years I later baptized along with six others.”

Jorge and Sergeant Baker were deployed together for 15 months. Years later, in another location, they were once again stationed on the same base. It was 6:00 p.m. and Jorge was in the car on his way home for the evening. “My cell phone rang,” says Jorge. “When I answered, Sergeant Baker said to me, ‘Chaps, I’m not in a good place.’ My immediate question was, where do you live? Sergeant Baker told me the address, and I realized I was driving right by his house.”

Jorge and Sergeant Baker reminisced about their previous time together. “Then Sergeant Baker told me his wife had left him and their children. But, then he revealed

something else. The ASIST training he had attended kept him from becoming a statistic. Instead, he’d reached out to me for help.”

On May 24, 2007, PFC Robert Dembowski died during combat operations. “The combat medic was devastated,” says Jorge. “As I hugged him, he kept repeating ‘I tried to save him, but I couldn’t.’”

The platoon needed notification of Dembowski’s death. “As we prepared to tell them, the Sergeant tasked to deliver the news fell on his knees. He cried out, ‘I can’t do this,’” Jorge recalls. “It was the toughest day of my life. As I saw my Soldiers hearts full of pain and their frantic reactions, I wanted to bring them comfort and hope.”

Jorge reflected with his Soldiers on the words of the tattoo that PFC Dembowski had on his arm. “The words Live Free or Die reminded us that we each had a chance to live in freedom,” says Jorge. “PFC Dembowksi was willing to die for that freedom so others could have the same opportunity.”

WE'RE A MINISTRY TEAM

This chaplain isn’t alone in his ministry. “I’m not where I am at today without God and without my wife, Evelyn,” says Jorge. “Her active ministry involvement in our children’s schools and with other military wives, as well as caring for our children when I’ve been deployed, has been a huge support. We are a chaplain ministry team.”

Recently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Jorge continues to strive for excellence. “I continue to ask myself how can I better serve those under my care in ministry,” says Jorge. He currently serves as the Deputy Corps Chaplain at the XVIII Airborne Corps in Fort Bragg, NC.

ADVENTIST CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

Chaplains from the Inter-European Division gathered in Florence, Italy for an annual ACM training. Dr. Marius Munteanu, Director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the Inter-European Division coordinated the training.

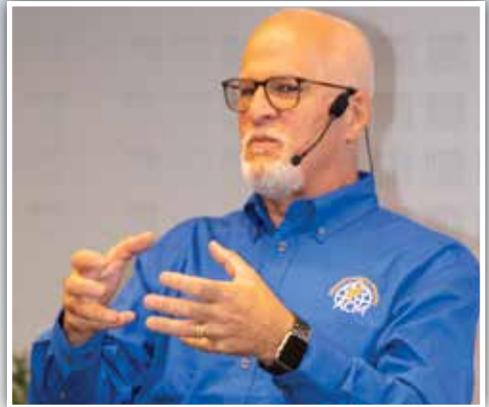
Dr. Mario Ceballos, Director, ACM-GC, opened the week with an introduction on working with diverse cultures and ethnicities. He then provided training on the philosophy of chaplaincy.

Chaplains Terry Swenson and Dilys Brooks focused on practical tools that chaplains could utilize as they interact with patients, students, and



institutional officers. These included mentoring of fellow chaplains, mentoring of institutional officers, chaplaincy training resources, meeting the specific needs of chaplains, how to institute a changing process and how





to minister to non-Adventists students, parents, patients, and families. Chaplains were equipped to implement these methods as soon as they returned to their home institutions.

Dr. Edwin Mendoza provided fascinating insights on how to help students who come from families that face emotional and relational difficulties. He also provided guidance on how to counsel students and parents.

During the four day program, fellowship and team building played a key role as chaplains shared their journey in chaplaincy.



EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

During a trip throughout the East-Central Africa Division, Dr. Mario E. Ceballos and Pastor Magulilo J. Mwakalonge, Director, ACM-ECD, met Adventist Corrections Chaplains.



INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

Exciting things are happening at the Adventist University of Colombia in Medellín, Colombia. Dr. Mario E. Ceballos and Chaplain Ivan Omaña led out in opening an extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Elder Hiram Ruiz is the Director for ACM IAD.



SOUTHERN ASIA PACIFIC DIVISION

Many highlights filled an ACM visit to the Southern Asia Pacific Division. During the 10 day trip, Dr. Mario Ceballos, Director, ACM-GC

conducted nightly meetings to a full house of Bible study interests. On the final Sabbath a baptism was held to acknowledge the decisions of many to follow Christ.

A delegation met with Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Chaplains Brigadier General Tirso Dolina. Currently, negotiations are underway to prepare an MOU for the AFP and ACM. This document will lead to an agreement for ACM endorsed chaplains to serve in the AFP.



L. to R. AFP Chaplain Marlon Antonio, Rodolfo Baustista, Director, Legal and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL), Central Luzon



Conference, Brigadier General Tirso Dolina, Dr. Mario E Ceballos, and Chaplain Ely Magtanong.

During a ceremony at Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Dr. Ceballos, President, presented Dr. Victoria Aja her Board Certified Chaplain certificate. She completed all of the Adventist Chaplaincy Institute requirements.

During a Sabbath afternoon meeting, the World Service

Organization-GC met with Adventists who serve in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and in the Philippine National Police Force. Dr. Ceballos spoke words of encouragement and answered attendees questions about serving God and Country.



GENERAL CONFERENCE

The Seventh-day Adventists and Military-related Service Conference was attended by Division and Union ACM Directors, World Service Organization Directors, and Religious Liberty Directors. The purpose of the conference was to reaffirm the church's position on non-combatancy. The church advocates non-combatancy, but leaves the individual to assess the situation for her or himself.



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An Administrator's PRAYER



Decades ago, when I was approaching my teen years, my father gave me a reading list. Included on that list was a book written by Elder Robert H. Pierson. He was the President of the General Conference from 1966 to 1979. The book I was to read was titled *So You Want To Be A Leader*.

Elder Pierson was prescient and eloquent as he shared principles and strategies for effective leadership.

Recently I rediscovered a prayer that Elder Pierson had written. Since much of what we do as chaplains is personal interaction, leadership, and administration, I thought that sharing this prayer would be apropos.

Dear LORD;

Help me to be myself what I desire others to become – a born-again, practicing Christian. Any reputation as a leader must be commensurate with this highest of all callings.

Help me to exercise the greatest tract, to be as thoughtful and kind as Jesus was with those His life touched. Help me never to be rude, never needlessly to speak a severe word, never to give needless pain to a sensitive soul.

Help me to be courageous, cheerful, zealous, and possessed of a holy enthusiasm for my work.

Give me a conscience that feels sharply the sin of inactivity; and enable me to make gateways of opportunity through the walls of protection that tend to shut me from the world.

May I never ask, "Is it safe?" "Is it politic?" "Is it popular?" but always, "Is it right?"

Help me to increase the value of every other man (person) around me.

Help me to be big enough to overlook slights, whether they are intentional or unintentional, to forgive and to forget injuries.

Give me grace never to retaliate or be vindictive – above all, Lord, never to use my influence or my position to get even with someone who has opposed or wounded me.

Help me never to needlessly create issues with my fellow workers.

May I avoid pettiness. Let me be willing to yield on points that do not involve principle.

Help me to treat those “under me” with as great a respect and deference as I treat those who are my “superiors.”

Help me never to pass the blame down but to accept my responsibility when things go wrong.

Help me never to ask others to do what I am able but unwilling to do myself. Let me exercise leadership by example even more than by precept.

Help me always to rejoice fully in the success of a brother, even when it may have been at my expense.

Forbid that I should ever feed upon the husks of other men’s failures or folly. If I have nothing good to say about a brother, Lord, help me to keep my mouth closed.

Remind me often every day that “he that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.”

Give me patience under fire, remembering the words of the wise man, “A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.”

Help me always to give in graciously when my brethren do not see light in my plans or proposals. Only when principle is at stake, let me “stand for the right though the heavens fall.” --*Education*, page 57.

Help me not to act impetuously or on snap judgment. May I ever remember that emergencies demand and should receive immediate attention and actions, but most decisions are better taken in the atmosphere of prayerful reflection.

When dealing with the erring may I act with love, mercy, and true justice – in the same spirit I would wish to be treated myself, always remembering to consider lest I also be tempted. May I use the Lord’s funds wisely – they are not mine but Thine, and many of those coppers came through long hours of toil and self-denial.

Help me never to become so engrossed with the motions of administration that I lose sight of my highest calling – soul winning. Remind me frequently that I am in this life only to prepare myself and others for the life to come.

Help me to be a man of prayer and a man of the Word – never let my encouragement of others in these two most important requisites of spiritual success be mere precept. Let every day begin and end with Thee.

May I never believe that any task, with divine help, is impossible.

Help me never to give less than my best to Thee and to Thy work – “good measure, pressed down, ... and running over.”

May I always make Christ first, last, and best in everything.

Amen.

This is my prayer for us as we lean forward in our ministries of presence, service, inspirational leadership, and administration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

RODRIGUEZ AWARDED

Korean Peninsula Peace Forum Medal of Peace

By Paul Anderson, D.Min.

Director/Endorser

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—North American Division



Recently, I had the privilege of visiting the Seventh-day Adventist service members and their families in Okinawa, South Korea and Hawaii. While in South Korea, I met with the senior chaplain for United States Forces Korea. When I asked him if he knew Chaplain Santiago Rodriguez, he smiled brightly and affirmed that he not only knew him, but that Chaplain Rodriguez was his favorite among the chaplains in his AOR.

He then invited me to attend an award ceremony on Friday, in the South Korean National Assembly Building, at which Chaplain Rodriguez would receive an award. I was able to adjust my itinerary and attend the event.

What a day it was. I literally ran into the honoree at the Dragon Hill hotel in Seoul. We met several other chaplains and were driven to the aforementioned venue. Once badged and ushered to the location, we were welcomed into the annual meeting of the Korean Peninsula Peace Forum. This is a coalition event of churches,

the United Nations, Joint Forces Korea and the United States Forces in Korea.

It was an august gathering of prominent ministers, rabbis, clergy, military and civilian leaders. Chaplain Rodriguez and six other chaplains received the prized Korean Peninsula Peace Forum Medal of Peace. This was the first time that military chaplains were awarded this honor.

Clearly, in his work, while stationed in South Korea, Chaplain

Rodriguez has exemplified the highest quality and best character of service for God, the United States, and South Korea. ACM is proud of his achievement. He has maintained and represented the highest caliber of his faith in the conduct of his mission. This award reflects the impact, in the world of those who live and serve, with undeviating commitment for God and country.

Chaplain Santiago Rodriguez, CDR, CHC, USN, ACM proudly salutes you!



Pictured are CH (LTC) Jorge Torres, CH (LTC) James Hall, CH (COL) Jeff Hawkins, CAPT Washington Johnson, CHC, USNR (Assistant Director, ACM), and CH (COL) Milton Johnson. Hawkins, the only Chaplain in the picture who is not an Adventist chaplain, is Commandant of the US Army Chaplain Center and School. — at Fort Jackson.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) honored Texico Conference President Lee-Roy Chacon and Executive Secretary Phil Robertson for their support of CH (CPT) Yepsica Moreno, US Army Reserve, who serves as a pastor in New Mexico.



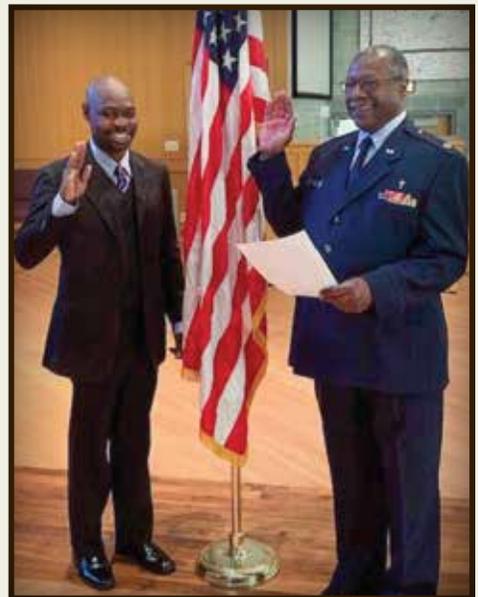
NAD UPDATES



Congratulations to CH (Major) Lane Campbell, USAF on his promotion to Major. He is stationed at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He also successfully completed his Doctor of Ministry degree.

Congratulations to Dr. Allen Mitchell a health care Chaplain on the completion of his Doctor of Ministry degree.

Assistant Director of ACM for the Great Plains Region, Bill Cork, recently completed his service in the US Army Reserve. His last assignment was with the Strategic Initiatives and Integration Group of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, where he worked for CH (COL) Jonathan McGraw, our senior Adventist chaplain in the Army. He immediately joined the Texas State Guard. It a volunteer position, focused on domestic response rather than combat preparation.



CH (Lt Col) James J North Jr (USAF, ret.), recently had the honor to preside at the commissioning of 2LT Frankel Francois, newly accessioned as a Chaplain Candidate in the US Army Reserve.



Chaplains at Adventist colleges and universities in North America met at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. Rich Carlson, chaplain at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, was recognized for 35 years of service.

Congratulations to CH (Colonel) John Elliot, U. S. Air Force, on his recent promotion to Colonel. ACM-NAD recognized this historic moment during a ceremony at the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Maryland. Dr. Paul Anderson, Director, ACM-NAD presented Chaplain Elliot with the ACM Flame Award. (Photo by Pieter Damsteegt)

Congratulations to CH (Captain) William Dykes on being sworn in as an active duty chaplain in the U.S. Army.

A close-up photograph of a stone fountain. Water is flowing from a tiered stone structure into a pool of water. The pool is filled with several water lilies with light green, fan-shaped leaves. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a garden or park setting. The overall mood is peaceful and natural.

REVERENCE FOR THE
LORD IS A FOUNTAIN OF
LIFE; ITS WATERS KEEP
A MAN FROM DEATH.

Proverbs 14:27, The Living Bible

Executive Editor:

Mario E. Ceballos
D.Min., BCC

Editor:

Deena Bartel-Wagner
 acmeditor@gc.adventist.org

Layout and Design:

Emily Harding
HardingDesign

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries
Mario Ceballos, Director/Endorser

THE ADVENTIST CHAPLAIN is a quarterly publication of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM), the ecclesiastical endorsing agency of the Seventh-day Adventist® Church.

This journal is distributed worldwide to chaplains, church leaders, institutions, and others involved in chaplaincies. To be added to our mailing list, please visit our website at AdventistChaplains.org, or email ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org.

Comments and/or articles will be considered for publication. Contact the editor at acmeditor@gc.adventist.org. Include your full name, complete mailing address, telephone, e-mail address, and current digital photos with all submissions. Items submitted by mail will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

CONTACT US: Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, Adventist World Headquarters, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Phone: 301-680-6780; fax: 301-680-6783; e-mail acm@gc.adventist.org; Website: AdventistChaplains.org.

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CORRESPONDENTS**East-Central Africa Division (ECD)**

Magulilo Mwakalonge, *ACM Director*
 mwakalongem@ecd.adventist.org

Euro-Asia Division (ESD)

Oleg Goncharov, *ACM Director*
 ogoncharov@esd.adventist.org

Inter-European Division (EUD)

Marius Munteanu, *ACM Director*
 munteanu@adventist.ro

Inter-American Division (IAD)

Hiram Ruiz, *ACM Director*
 ruizhi@interamerica.org

North American Division (NAD)

Paul S. Anderson, *ACM Director*
 paulanderson@nadadventist.org

Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)

Lisa Clouzet, *ACM Director*
 clouzet@andrews.edu

South American Division (SAD)

Bruno Raso, *ACM Director*
 bruno.raso@adventistas.org

South Pacific Division (SPD)

Trafford Fischer, *ACM Director*
 traffordfischer@adventist.org.au

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)

Busi Khumalo, *ACM Director*
 khumalob@sid.adventist.org | Skype: handybusi

Southern Asia Division (SUD)

Ramesh Jadhav, *ACM Director*
 rameshjadhav3383@gmail.com

Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)

Wendell Mandolang, *ACM Director*
 wmandolang@ssd.org

Trans-European Division (TED)

Patrick Johnson, *ACM Director*
 pjohnson@ted-adventist.org

West-Central Africa Division (WAD)

N. John Enang, *ACM Director*
 njenang@wad-adventist.org or
 njenang2000@yahoo.co.uk



Sometimes even to live
is an act of courage.

— Seneca



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
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Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

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